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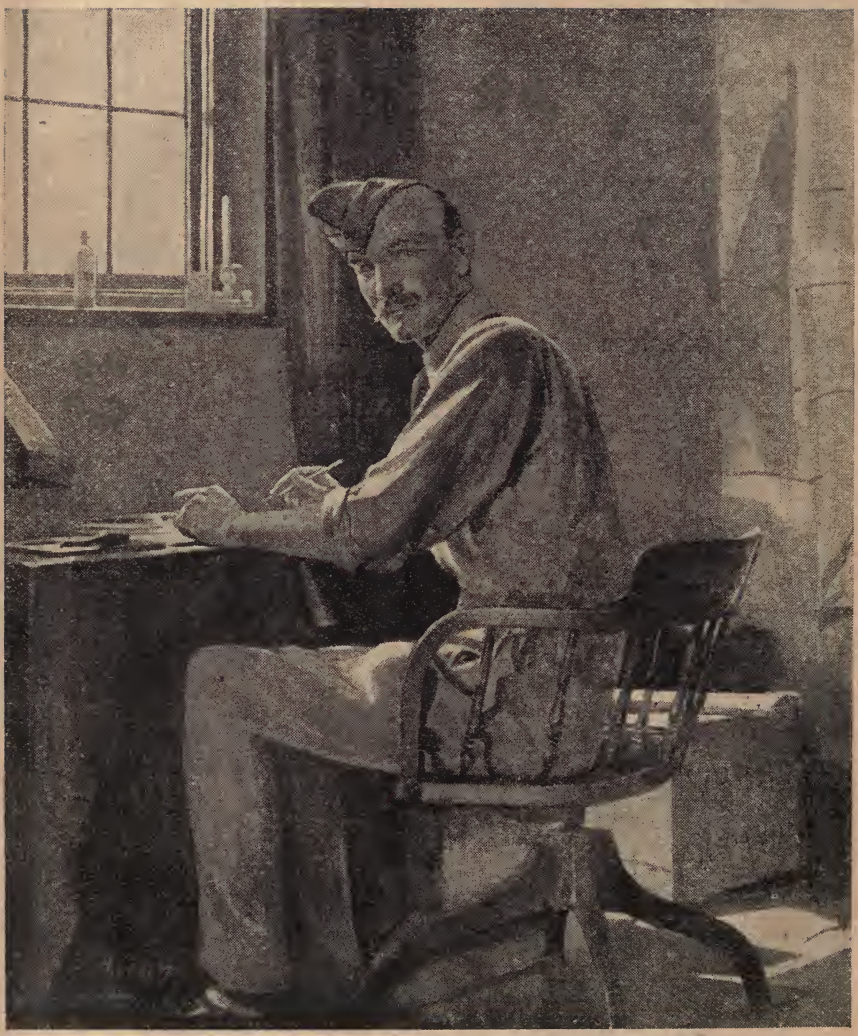
BADEN-POWELL

OF MAFEKING



BADEN-POWELL IN HIS OFFICE

# BADEN-POWELL OF MAFEKING

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE BUILDERS," "THE PATHS OF THE PRUDENT," ETC.

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# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

TO THE MAN IN THE STREET

PART I.

BADEN-POWELL—THE MANNER OF MAN HE IS

| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | The Boy and His People | 11 |
| II. | "Bathing-Towel" | 18 |
| III. | Learning the Trade | 24 |
| IV. | Scout and Sportsman | 29 |
| V. | The Kindly Humorist | 42 |

PART II.

AN EXPEDITION AND A CAMPAIGN

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | The Ashanti Expedition, 1895-6 | 47 |
| II. | The Matabele Campaign, 1896 | 64 |

PART III.

THE STORY OF THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING, 1899-1900

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | The Warm Corner | 89 |
| II. | Warmer and Warmer | 97 |
| III. | Sitting Tight | 104 |
| IV. | The Last Days | 111 |
| V. | The Relief and the Empire | 119 |

924

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


| | | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Baden-Powell in his Office | | | *Frontispiece* |
| A Merciful Man | (*Sketch by the Author*) | | 14 |
| The Horse Guard | " | " | 26 |
| Following up the Spoor | " | " | 29 |
| Britannia | " | " | 45 |
| Sketch Map of the March to Kumassi | " | " | 48 |
| Human Sacrifice at Bantama | " | " | 51 |
| Portrait of King Prempeh | " | " | 55 |
| King Prempeh watching the arrival of Troops | " | " | 59 |
| Embarkation of King Prempeh | " | " | 63 |
| Sketch Map of the Theatre of Operations | " | " | 65 |
| Mafeking to Buluwayo—Ten Days and Nights by Coach | " | " | 66 |
| The Umgusa Fight: June 6th | " | " | 67 |
| Eight to One | " | " | 70 |
| Scout Burnham | " | " | 73 |
| The Peace Indaba with the Matopo Rebels | " | " | 75 |
| The Battle of August 5th | " | " | 77 |
| A Human Salt-Cellar | " | " | 79 |
| Fresh Horse-Beef | " | " | 81 |
| Dolce far Niente | " | " | 87 |
| An every-day Scene in the Market | | | 95 |
| Strolling Home in the Morning | (*Sketch by the Author*) | | 104 |
| "Halt! who comes there?" | " | " | 104 |
| A Cape Boy Sentry | " | " | 113 |
| Rough Map of Brickfields | | | 116 |


## NOTE


THE AUTHOR DESIRES TO EXPRESS HIS OBLIGATIONS TO MISS BADEN-POWELL AND TO THE REV. CANON HAIG-BROWN FOR THEIR KINDNESS IN AFFORDING HIM HELP AND INFORMATION IN PREPARING THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF MAJOR-GENERAL BADEN-POWELL'S CAREER.

# INTRODUCTION

## TO THE MAN IN THE STREET

It may well and fittingly be complained that of late years we English folk have shown an unpardonable spirit of curiosity about things which do not concern us. We have brought into being more than one periodical publication full of gossip about the private life and affairs of folk of eminence, and there are too many of us who are never so much pleased as when we are informed that a certain great artist abhors meat, or that a famous musician is inordinately fond of pickled salmon. There was a time when, to use a homely old phrase, people minded their own business and left that of their neighbours' alone—that day in some degree seems to have been left far behind, and most of us feel that we are being defrauded of our just rights if we may not step across the threshold of my lady's drawing-room or set foot in the statesman's cabinet. The fact is that we have itching ears nowadays, and cherish a passion for gossip which were creditable to the old women of the open doorways. We want to know all —which is to say as much as chance will tell us—about the people of whom the street is talking, and the more we can hear of them, even of the things which appertain in reality to no one but themselves, the better we are pleased. But even here, in what is undoubtedly an evil, there is an element of possible good which under certain circumstances may be developed into magnificent results. Since we must talk amongst ourselves, since we must satisfy this very human craving for what is after all gossip, let us

find great subjects to gossip about. If we must talk in the streets let us talk about great folk, about great deeds, about great examples, and since our subjects are great let us talk of them in a great way. There is no need to chatter idly and to no purpose—we shall be all the better if our gossip about great men and great things leads us to even a faint imitation of both.

We English folk possess at this moment a magnificent opportunity of talking and thinking about the things and the men which make for good. It may be that ever since the Empire rose as one man to sustain the honour and glory of England we have glorified our fighting man a little too much. It may be that we have raised our voices too loudly in the music-halls and been too exuberant in our conduct in the streets. But after all, what does it mean? We are vulgar, we English, in our outward expression of joy and delight—yes, but how splendidly our vulgarity is redeemed and even transformed into a fine thing by our immense feeling for race and country! What is it, after all, that we have been doing during this time of war but building up, renewing, strengthening that mysterious Something which for lack of a better word we call Empire? War, like sorrow, strengthens, chastens, and encourages. Just as the heart of a strong man is purified and made stronger by sorrow, so the spirit of a nation is lifted up and set on a higher pedestal by the trials and the awfulness of war. Heaven help the people which emerges from a great struggle broken, sullen, despondent!—Heaven be thanked that from the blood of our fellows spilt in South Africa there have already sprung the flowers of new fortitude and new strength and new belief in our God-given destiny as the saviours of the world. It is as it ever was:—

"We are a people yet!
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
  Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
  His Britons in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
  To those great men who fought and kept it ours."

We have a voice!—yes, and is it not well that at this juncture it should be raised in honour of the men who have mounted guard for us at the gates of Empire? It is well, too, that our ears should listen to stories of them—surely there is no taint of unpardonable curiosity in that, but rather an inquisitiveness which is worthy of praise. No man can hear of great men, nor think of brave deeds, without finding himself made better and richer. It is in the contemplation of greatness that even the most poorly-equipped amongst us may find a step to a higher place of thought.

Here then is an excuse for attempting to tell plain folk the story of Baden-Powell (no need to label *him* with titles or prefixes!) in a plain way. It is a task which has already been attempted and achieved by more than one person: the only reason why it should be attempted again is that a good story cannot be told too often, and that in its variations there may be something of value added to it by the particular narrator. It seems to me that this story of Baden-Powell finds its great charm in its revelation of character, and as being typical of the British officer at his best. I do not find Baden-Powell so much a prodigy as a type of the flower of a class which of late has been much maligned. We have been told, over and over again since we became involved in our struggle with the Boer, that our officers are badly trained, incompetent, and careless. It is not to be denied that there is room for improvement in their military education and training, but I think we shall have hard work to improve them in one matter of some slight importance—their cheerful, brave, steady devotion to Duty. When one comes to think of it, seriously, what a great quality that is! To be ready to go anywhere, to do anything, or to attempt its doing with all the strength one possesses, to face whatever a moment may bring forth with the cheery pluck with which a schoolboy goes into a scrimmage—are these not qualities which make for greatness? It seems to me that they are found in the British officer in an extraordinary degree, and that the life of Baden-Powell as we know it is typical

of the results of the possession of them. I do not mean to say that every British officer is a Baden-Powell, but I cherish a strong conviction that Baden-Powell himself has said, more than once, when overwhelmed with congratulations, "Oh, any other fellow would have done the same!" Of course, that is all wrong—we all know that not every other fellow would. But I believe every other fellow would have Tried—and to Try means a world of things. After all, the greatest thing in this world, and the surest passport to happiness in the next, is doing one's Duty, cheerfully, fearlessly, and confidently, and it is because there is so much evidence of the way in which the British officer attempts to do his, in the story of Baden-Powell's career, that I make no excuse for begging the man in the street to read it again, and again, and yet again—whoever writes, or tries to write it.

J. S. F.

East Hardwick, Yorks
*September*, 1900

# BADEN-POWELL OF MAFEKING

## Part I.

## BADEN-POWELL—THE MANNER OF MAN HE IS

### I.

### THE BOY AND HIS PEOPLE

If it seems something of an impertinence to write about the life of a man who is still alive and apparently determined to be so for many years of energy and activity, it appears to be almost in the nature of a sacrilege to draw aside the veil which ought to shroud the privacy of his family life. Most English folk, whether they show it or not, are deeply in love with the sentiment expressed in Browning's lines,—

> "A peep through my window if some should prefer,
> But, please you, no foot over threshold of mine"—

but in the case of the Baden-Powell family many feet have already crossed the threshold, and many hands have drawn aside the curtain. It is not often that the lifting of the veil which usually hides English family life from the world's gaze reveals as charming and instructive a picture as is found in the contemplation of the people to whom the hero of Mafeking belongs. We all know that it is not necessary to spring from a great family in order to be a great man; we all know, too, that many a great family has produced a great fool. But when a great family does

produce a great man the result is greater than could be obtained in any other way. Baden-Powell comes of a family-stock great in many ways, and were there reason or time for it, nothing could be more delightful or instructive than to endeavour to trace the connection between the main features and characteristics of his life and the hereditary influences which must needs have acted upon him. His ancestors have done so many fine things that one feels something like amazement to find their present day representative still adding lustre to the family name. According to the ordinary laws all the strength and virtue should have been exhausted in the stock ere now, but just as Baden-Powell himself is in certain ways a mysterious contradiction to things in general, laughing where other men would weep, and rising to great heights where most men would turn back to the valley in despair, so his family, after many generations of great activity, contradict the usual laws by increasing in strength and giving evidence of that growth and development which, as Dr. Newman told us in a remarkable sentence, is the only evidence of life.

Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell was born at 6, Stanhope Street, London, on the 22nd February, 1857. He was the seventh son of the late Rev. Baden-Powell, sometime Savilian Professor in the University of Oxford, and of Henrietta Grace, daughter of Admiral W. H. Smyth, K.S.F. Of his father the future defender of Mafeking can have known little; Professor Baden-Powell died when his seventh son was only three years old. He was a man of great talents, widely known as a profound student in the physical sciences and as an exponent of broad and tolerant theology, a frequent contributor of learned papers to the transactions of the Royal Society, and a whole-hearted lover of nature and of the sights and sounds of country life. One would like to know more of him, and of such intercourse as existed between him and his children. They, however, were separated from him at an early age and were left to the sole guidance and friendship of their mother. It is rarely that children have a mother so well equipped for the performance of a difficult task—

Mrs. Baden-Powell is in all respects a great woman and eminently fitted to be the mother of a hero. She, like her husband, came of a stock eminent for its qualities. Her father, Admiral W. H. Smyth, was a well-known seaman of his day, and his children have all achieved eminence in one way or another. One of his sons, Warington, became Mineral Inspector to the Crown; another, Fiazzi, Astronomer Royal for Scotland; a third, General Sir Henry Smyth, after a distinguished military career, was Governor and Commander-in-Chief at Malta from 1890 to 1893. Of his two daughters, the younger, Georgina Rosetta, was married in 1858 to Sir W. H. Flower, the eminent scientist; the elder, Henrietta Grace, had previously married Professor Baden-Powell.

It is often said that a boy is what his mother makes him, and no one will deny that there is a certain amount of truth in the saying. A boy naturally turns rather to his mother than to his father when he first feels the need of sympathy, and it is well for him if his mother has not merely sympathy but perception and understanding to give him. Mrs. Baden-Powell appears to have been singularly fitted to help her children with her love, sympathy, and tact during the earlier years of their youth. Herself a brilliantly clever woman, she recognized intuitively the workings of dawning talent and ability in her own children, and she encouraged and helped them as only a woman of great gifts could. As a linguist, an artist, a musician, a mathematician, and a lover of science and of nature, Mrs. Baden-Powell has many attainments, and it must be evident to the most obtuse that her children received a liberal education in merely knowing her. When Professor Baden-Powell died his widow was left with a responsibility from which the bravest woman might well have shrunk. She had been married fifteen years, and there were ten children of the marriage, and the eldest was not fourteen years of age. That Mrs. Baden-Powell had no shrinking, that she devoted herself to her task with courage, determination, and skill is proved by the results with which the world, for its good, has been familiarized. The training of her children, as far as one may

speak of it with reserve and respect, seems to have been marked by the greatest good sense. She took an interest in everything that interested them; she inculcated a strict regard for honour in their minds; she taught them to bear pain as strong men should; above everything she strove to bring all the influence of nature into their lives. Such an education as this could scarcely fail to produce men well fitted to do something, and Mrs. Baden-Powell's sons have done much. Her eldest son attained considerable distinction as the author of an important work on the Land Systems of British India, and occupied a high judicial post in that country ere his death. Her second son, Mr. Warington Baden-Powell, after serving some years in the navy, turned from the sea to the atmosphere of the Law Courts, and is now a Queen's Counsel of eminence. Her third son, the late Sir George Baden-Powell, who died in 1898, was, until recent events brought his younger brother's name more prominently before the public, the best-known member of the family. His record was a particularly brilliant and useful one. He took the Chancellor's Prize at Oxford in 1876. He was private secretary to the Governor of Victoria, 1877-78; Joint Special Commissioner in the West India Colonies, 1882-84; Assistant to Sir Charles Warren in Bechuanaland, 1884-85; Joint Special Commissioner in Malta, 1887-88; British Commissioner in the Behring Sea Question, 1891; and British Member of the Washington Joint Committee in 1892. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society and an LL.D., and represented the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool in Parliament from 1885 until his death. He wrote several important works and papers on scientific, economic, and political subjects, and was created a baronet in 1888. Other sons of this fortunate and gifted mother are Mr.

A Merciful Man.

Frank Baden-Powell, who, after a distinguished career at Oxford, became a barrister and is well known as an artist of great merit, and Major B. F. S. Baden-Powell, of the Scots Guards, whose invention of war-kites was of great value during the operations at Modder River. Of the seventh son it is the province of this book to speak more fully and particularly than of his brothers, but this brief reference to Mrs. Baden-Powell's family would be incomplete if it did not include some notice of the sister of all these clever boys, who, clever and brilliant herself, must needs have watched the development of their lives with true pride and affection. I ventured to ask Miss Baden-Powell the other day two questions which seemed to me peculiarly pertinent to the matter I had just taken in hand. The first arose out of a passage in General Baden-Powell's work on the Ashanti Expedition of 1896, wherein he declares that "a smile and a stick will carry you through the world." I asked Miss Baden-Powell if this saying formed a sort of keynote to her brother's character as she knew it. She replied that she found it impossible to conceive of his using a stick in any case. So, in my estimate of him, whatever it may be worth, the stick disappears from Baden-Powell, but the smile remains and has gained much in potency. My second question had perhaps a much deeper significance. I asked if in his sister's view—and it has been my experience, founded on much cynical observation of things, that if one wants honest criticism of one's self one can get it, in all truth, from one's sister—the future warrior was in his boyhood at all phenomenal, if he gave, as some embryonic geniuses unfortunately do give, any notable evidence of the greatness that was coming. And I rejoiced to hear that he did not, that he was a human boy, neither precocious nor a prig—just a healthy, fun-loving English boy, full of kindliness and of delight in the joys of life's morning.

That is exactly what one likes to feel about Baden-Powell's boyhood. From what one can gather from many sources about his early days they appear to have been marked chiefly by the sunniness of his own disposition. His education was conducted

under a tutor at home until he was eleven years old, and he spent much of his time in outdoor pursuits. He learned to ride at a very early age, and was fond of exploring unknown regions in company with his brothers. Much of the future scout's boyhood was spent at a country house near Tunbridge Wells, and in the neighbouring woods he lived many hours of glorious life. But he appears to have had almost as many pursuits in boyhood as he has shown himself fond of in manhood. He began to draw and paint at a very early age. Before he was three years old he executed a pen-and-ink drawing of camels and camel drivers, the execution of which was wonderful for so young a child. It was quickly perceived in the family circle that he used his left hand, which he has always used throughout his life with equal facility to his use of the right, and his mother consulted Ruskin as to the advisability of checking this propensity. Ruskin advised her to let the boy use his left hand as freely as his mind wished, with the result that he has always been able to work at his sketches and drawings with both hands at the same time, drawing with the left and shading with the right—a performance which is surely rarely equalled. Another of his boyish amusements was to play with dolls, and to make their clothes; another, succeeding, one supposes, the doll era, was to take part with his brothers in the performance of plays. He has always been passionately devoted to dramatic art, and showed his love for theatrical matters at a very early age. It is only what one would expect from his extraordinary versatility to hear that he used to write the plays himself, invariably fitting himself with a "fat" low-comedy part.

Although he was in no sense of the word that most unspeakable thing, a precocious child, Baden-Powell showed in his boyhood some signs of the inclinations which were working in him. Nothing pleased him so much as to explore new ground in the shape of woods and fields; it was an exquisite delight to him to get lost in an unfamiliar part of the country and to be obliged to find a way out. He showed great pleasure in drawing maps and charts, with which he took infinite pains, and he was very fond of

cutting figures of animals out of paper, and of imitating the cries and calls of birds and voices of animals. Then, again, he showed at an early age the resourcefulness and dependency upon self which have been such marked characteristics of his military career. He entirely dispensed with the services of a nurse before he was three years old; he kept a very careful account of the expenditure of his pocket money, and in everything seems to have shown a wisdom not at all out of keeping with his light-hearted disposition. It may be that much of his light-heartedness has unconsciously sprung from his thoroughness in doing things. It was fortunate for him that he possessed a great friend in his brother, Mr. Warington Baden-Powell, who, being ten years his senior, was able to give him not merely advice but excellent example. In company with his brothers the future soldier lived a great part of his holiday-time as a sailor, roughing it in small yachts around the coast and over the seas. The yachts were designed by Mr. Warington Baden-Powell, who also acted as skipper, and were managed entirely by himself and his younger brothers. Now and then the small craft and its crew happened upon tight places, and on one occasion, while off Torquay in a ten-tonner named the *Koh-i-noor*, they had an experience which would have frightened most boys to such an extent that the sea and its perils would have been eschewed for ever. A violent storm broke over them one dark evening, raged throughout the night and far into the next day, and necessitated a battling with wind and wave which only the bravest dare face. But Baden-Powell and his brothers appear to have been boys of infinite bravery and resource. They travelled extensively about the English and Welsh coasts, and spent some of their holidays in Norway, and wherever they went they depended upon themselves for whatever was necessary to be done in the way of cooking, repairing, and boat-mending. No better schooling than this, developing as it did the priceless qualities of energy, self-reliance, and confidence, could have been devised for the boy who was destined in after years to safeguard the honour of England in beleaguered Mafeking.

## II.

### "BATHING-TOWEL"

AFTER being under the care of a tutor until he was eleven years old, Baden-Powell was sent to a preparatory school at Tunbridge Wells, and remained there for two years, leaving it at the end of that time with the sincere regret of his master, who had found him an admirable example to his fellows. In 1870 he was admitted, on the Duke of Marlborough's nomination, to the Foundation of Charterhouse, then in its ancient quarters near Smithfield. Two years later he went with the Foundation to its new home near Godalming, and there remained, an inmate of Mr. Girdlestone's house, until 1876. Of these six years of Baden-Powell's life it is necessary to say something, if one wishes to form an accurate idea of their importance in moulding and strengthening his character. School-life exercises a vast influence upon a boy's future career; it may make or mar it; it is certain, indeed, that he cannot go through it without receiving influences of the most paramount importance. All the world knows now what manner of man Baden-Powell is; all the world has no doubt wondered what sort of boy he was in his days of school-life.

I recently visited the Charterhouse in order to ask Dr. Haig-Brown, who was Headmaster of the Charterhouse School from 1863 to 1897, and has since then been Master of the Charterhouse, if he would tell me something about his old pupil. There was a certain amount of satisfaction in setting foot within the precincts of a place so closely associated with one of the men of the moment; there was a strong and restful sense of relief, too, in escaping from the whirl and roar of London's crowded streets into

so delightful a haunt of peace as that which lies in their very midst. Between the noise and bustle of the much-thronged thoroughfares about Smithfield and the cloistral quiet of the Master's Lodge in the Charterhouse there was a difference intensely welcome to a lover of quiet places, and I could not help thinking as I sat in Dr. Haig-Brown's study, with the noise of the outer world reduced to a low and easy murmur, that there must have been moments during the siege of Mafeking when Baden-Powell's mind turned to the grey walls and quaint gables of his old school with perhaps a little longing for the peace which broods there always. It was easy to see that the thought and memory of the old Carthusian was cherished there. In Dr. Haig-Brown's study hung a picture of the face now familiar to all of us through the medium of innumerable illustrated newspapers and magazines, the good-humoured, strong face, shadowed by the big hat, and in one of the drawing-rooms stood a small table gaily decorated with red, white and blue ribbons, whereon had been gathered together a collection of little objects—some of them the penny wares of the London street vendors—associated with the name of the hero of Mafeking. It was easy to see, too, that Baden-Powell was deeply placed in the affections of his old schoolmaster. Dr. Haig-Brown spoke of him in simple words which showed more feeling than the mere sound of them implied. He spoke of his great truthfulness, his love of fun and of sport, of his self-respect, and of his interest in his old school. He showed me a volume of the school magazine, *The Greyfriar*, which contained several contributions, literary and artistic, by the man who has so ably sustained all the best traditions of a great school, and has thought of it when far away and busily engaged in fighting his country's cause. And perhaps no greater tribute could be paid to Baden-Powell's greatness than Dr. Haig-Brown paid him in a few words, words which convey a great and deep meaning—"He was a boy whose word you could not doubt."

Dr. Haig-Brown was kind enough to give me a copy of an article on Baden-Powell which he wrote for a recent number of

*The Church Monthly*, and to allow me to make use of any of the remarks which he there made as regards his old pupil. It is an article which shows that in the opinion of his schoolmaster the recent brilliant achievements of Baden-Powell were foreshadowed in his early youth. Quoting Wordsworth's famous line,

"The child is father of the man,"

Dr. Haig-Brown goes on to say that though it is not always easy to found on observation of early life a prophecy of the future career, it is not so difficult when characteristics have found a field for display, to trace in the memories of youth the qualities that have formed a great man, and that the boyish life of Baden-Powell furnishes an illustration in point. Then he proceeds to speak of Baden-Powell's joyousness of spirit, of his indomitable energy, his versatility of talent, his wit, kindliness, and activity of body and mind, and of his judgment and fidelity in positions of trust and responsibility. And there is one passage in Dr. Haig-Brown's article which, to my mind, is of supreme importance to anyone endeavouring to form an estimate of Baden-Powell's character as illustrated by his school-days. "In his attitude to the younger boys," says Dr. Haig-Brown, "he was generous, kind and encouraging, and in those early days gave no slight indication of the qualities which have since gained for him the confidence, respect, and love of all the soldiers who have been under his command." Here, indeed, the promise of the boy has been amply fulfilled in the performance of the man.

Another foreshadowing of Baden-Powell's future career is found in a characteristic entry in the school's *Football Annual* for 1876, wherein it is recorded that "R. S. S. B.-P. is a good goalkeeper, keeping cool, and always to be depended upon." Keeping cool—always to be depended upon—what a magnificent endowment! How many of us, fighting our little battles in life's war-time, would give all that we possess if we could always keep cool—if we knew that other folk could always depend upon us! Those of us who believe in athletic exercises as forming no inconsiderable

part of a boy's training will find no difficulty in believing that much of the coolness and resource which have distinguished Baden-Powell in his various campaigns were deepened and strengthened by the fact that he was very fond of football. The two qualities were there before, of course, but the goalkeeping added a new fibre or two of strength to them. Dr. Haig-Brown took me out upon a terrace which commanded a view of the old Charterhouse playground. It, like the school buildings, is now used by the Merchant Taylors' School, and in one corner stood two or three practice-nets for cricket, while at each end of the playing area a certain wornness of aspect showed where many a struggle had taken place around the goal-posts during the bygone spring and winter. Dr. Haig-Brown told me that his old pupil played other games than football, notably cricket and racquets, but added that football was his chief love, and goalkeeping his great forte. One characteristic he possessed as goalkeeper which is not often found on the football field. When the fight was raging far off in the enemy's quarters, and he himself was relieved of immediate duty for the moment, he used to delight the onlookers who crowded round about the goal which he was defending by cracking all sorts of extraordinary jokes, which only ceased when he rushed forward to repel an attack with a vigour and force not less strenuous than his wonderful flow of spirits. Naturally enough, there was always a little group of spectators round the goal-posts where "Bathing-Towel" (a nickname which has clung to him always in the minds of old Carthusians) stood intent and alert, but not so entirely preoccupied as to forget the humour which was always bubbling up within him.

During his school-days, either in the precincts of the ancient Charterhouse or in the new home of the school at Godalming, where he was an inmate of Mr. Girdlestone's house, "Bathing-Towel," in true promise of his later years, appears to have been very fully occupied, and to have had quite a multitude of interests. He was extremely fond of theatrical representations, and became such a favourite that his mere appearance on the stage invariably

evoked wild applause from his schoolfellows. He wrote for the school magazine, and helped to illustrate it; he was a member of the chapel choir, assisted in forming the school rifle corps, which he represented as one of the Charterhouse VIII. for three consecutive years at Wimbledon, and persuaded the powers that were into instituting a school orchestra. He played various instruments, and notably the violin, with some skill, and it is said that he was on one occasion discovered playing the piano with his toes. He was always in high spirits, always making jokes, always good-humoured. The whoop in which he was wont to indulge when he became excited by the struggles of the football field is still remembered by those of his old schoolfellows who heard it, and there is scarcely an old Carthusian of "Bathing-Towel's" day who has not some quaint story to tell of him, or whose manner in telling it does not suggest that the defender of Mafeking must have been one of the sunniest-natured boys that one could wish to meet.

But all this, of course, only deals with one side of "Bathing-Towel's" school-days—the side which after all has more to do with the pleasant things of life than with the serious things. Now that everybody knows what manner of man he is who held Mafeking against the Boers through seven long months of privation, no one will be surprised to hear that "Bathing-Towel" was just as earnest in his work at school as he was joyous in his play. Dr. Haig-Brown says of him that he never showed want of respect for his masters or lack of consideration for his schoolfellows. He speaks with some stress of his liberality of feeling and of his natural gift as a leader. He worked hard and seriously, and though he was very reserved he was never shy, and approached his masters on any subject on which he desired advice and enlightenment with a total absence of timidity or embarrassment. Naturally, then, he was a great favourite in the school. He entered Charterhouse by a low form, for there had very wisely been no attempt to force his education, but so well did he work there that by 1875—five years after his admission—

he had reached the sixth form, and on the recommendation of Mr. Girdlestone, his house-master, was made a monitor. Dr. Haig-Brown says that he discharged the duties of this responsible position with judgment and fidelity, bringing his intelligence to bear on the interpretation of the school's traditions, and being especially considerate and thoughtful in his attitude to the younger boys.

It is scarcely necessary to say that "Bathing-Towel's" memory is much cherished by his old schoolfellows, nor that he himself keeps a very warm corner in his heart for the great foundation to which he now belongs in a stronger sense than ever. Whenever he is in England he quickly makes his way to Godalming, there to renew his youth, and it was to Dr. Haig-Brown, whom he visited at the Charterhouse just before sailing for South Africa, that he expressed the wish—very soon to be amply satisfied!—that the authorities would give him a warm corner. *The Greyfriar*, the illustrated school magazine which possesses a peculiar charm for all Carthusians, past and present, has at various times been enlivened by contributions from his pen and pencil, and on more than one occasion he has made another appearance on the stage where his boyish jokes used to find such favour. No wonder that Charterhouse cherishes his memory and is proud of his career. "Baden-Powell," says Dr. Haig-Brown, "has already secured a distinguished place among Carthusian heroes. Probably, if his youth had been spent elsewhere, he would not have fallen short of the high distinction he has won; but those who love Charterhouse (and they are many) may be excused if they feel some pride in this association with a man who has devoted such varied and sterling qualities to the service of his country."

## III.

### LEARNING THE TRADE

It seems somewhat strange to learn that when Baden-Powell left school it was with no definite notion of entering the army. One would have thought, considering all his subsequent brilliant achievements, that his mind had been set on being a soldier from some very early age. This, however, was not the case. When he said good-bye to the Charterhouse he had no definite idea as to the character of his future career, beyond a strong impulse to engage in some pursuit which would show him the wild places of the world. There was some talk of his going into the Indian Civil Service, especially as he wanted to study life and nature in that country, but it was pointed out to him that military life in India would give him equal if not superior facilities to that of the civilian. His first intention, however, was to proceed to Oxford, and by the advice of his godfather, the late Professor Jowett, he was entered at Christ Church, where he meant to spend two years. Then came one of those curious events, which, looked at in the light of after happenings, seem to work as special interpositions of Providence. Hearing that an army examination was about to be held, Baden-Powell, apparently more out of whimsicality than anything else, decided to go in for it. The examination over, he set out for a yachting cruise in company with his brother, quite careless, so far as one may be permitted to judge, of the immediate results of this testing of his abilities. The immediate results were, to say the least of them, surprising and even startling. The examination took place in the summer of 1876; ere summer was over he received an official communication from the Duke of Cambridge, as Commander-in-Chief, informing him that out of 718 candidates he had passed fifth (ranking as second place for a cavalry regiment), and that in consequence of

his success he had been gazetted to a second lieutenancy in the 13th Hussars, his commission being ante-dated by two years as a reward for the uniform good work shown in his papers. This was the beginning of Baden-Powell's military career. Within a few days of his receipt of the official communication he was on his way to join his regiment, which at that time was stationed in India.

The 13th Hussars, thus suddenly reinforced by this bright and lively young prodigy, prides itself greatly on the fact that it figured in the great affair at Balaklava, when in company with the 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards, the 1st, 2nd and 6th Dragoons, the 4th, 8th and 11th Hussars, the 17th Lancers, and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, it assisted in performing certain deeds and affairs which have made military critics wonder ever since in more ways than one. It was then known as the 13th Light Dragoons. Like nearly every British regiment it possesses numerous nicknames. It is sometimes called "The Green Dragoons," sometimes "The Ragged Brigade." It has a third nickname in "The Evergreens," a fourth in "The Geraniums," a fifth in "Gardner's Dragoons." These five varying sobriquets are much more pleasant than a sixth—"The Great Runaway Prestonpans"—which seems to imply certain things that one would rather not think of. Its motto is "*Vivet in Æternum*"; its badge a V.R. in a Garter, crowned. When Baden-Powell joined it in India in 1876 it was in command of Sir Baker Russell, a fine soldier who had served through the terrible times of the Indian Mutiny and recently passed through the Ashanti War of 1873.

The light-heartedness which characterized Baden-Powell's early days appears to have increased rather than deteriorated when he entered upon the serious business of life. There is a curious story told of one of his first doings on joining his regiment in India which serves to show what high spirits and whimsical notions were his in those days. Assembling all the European children he could find or hear of, he produced from his kit an ocarina—an instrument from which most people would surely despair of extracting much music!—and forming his youthful

following into procession, marched at their head through the streets playing "The Girl I Left Behind Me." One learns a good deal about Baden-Powell from that little incident, and it is not surprising that it should have done a good deal to make him popular with the folk amongst whom he had suddenly appeared. But his popularity with his brother officers seems to have been assured from the first. Just as he had been the life and soul of Charterhouse in all things appertaining to gaiety and amusements, so he speedily became a moving spirit in regimental jinks and jollities. It was not long ere his fellows discovered that they had got a veritable prodigy amongst them where theatrical matters

The Horse Guard.

were concerned, and that behind the new-comer's somewhat reserved manner there lay such funds of light and original humour as are too seldom met with in this world. At this time, no doubt, Baden-Powell's wonderful versatility was widening and deepening, and his extraordinary facility in doing anything that had to be done must have been nothing short of astonishing to those who witnessed it. Always ready and always willing to take anything in hand, it is little wonder that those who remember him in those early days in India speak of him with an affection which is not the less real because there is always a vein of merriment in it.

But while Baden-Powell was continuing his old pranks and cultivating his old spirit of laughter, he lost no opportunity of learning his trade as a soldier. It is characteristic of the man

that though until he entered the army he had cherished no very definite notion of a military career, he had no sooner taken the final step than he began to devote himself to his profession with all his might. He speedily became a perfect horseman, made himself fully acquainted with regimental duties and details, and began to read systematically. He took a first class and special certificate for topography in the Garrison Class Examination of 1878. Coming back to England soon afterwards for musketry instruction at Hythe, he soon took a first class extra certificate, and on his return to India was appointed Musketry Instructor at Quetta. His advancement in his profession, indeed, if not extraordinarily rapid, was sure and certain. It is not pertinent to the character of such a necessarily brief sketch of his life as this to lay too much stress on all that he did ere he came into special prominence some few years ago. But when one considers the brief facts of his military career one easily sees how thoroughly Baden-Powell—to use a well-understood phrase—learnt his trade. He served with his regiment (of which he was adjutant for many years) in India, Afghanistan, and South Africa; he was on the Staff as Assistant Military Secretary in South Africa in 1887-89; he was in the operations in Zululand in 1888, and was mentioned in despatches; he acted as Assistant Military Secretary at Malta from 1890 to 1893; he went on special service to Ashanti in 1895, and was Chief Staff Officer in the Matabele Campaign of 1896, and was promoted from his old regiment to the command of the 5th Dragoon Guards in 1897. It required little knowledge of military life and matters to realize how thoroughly the future hero of Mafeking had made himself acquainted with the duties of the perfectly-equipped soldier during the twenty-one years dealt with in this brief outline of his doings. Such an outline is indeed less than brief, for it records scarcely anything but the main facts of his military advancement. When one comes to remember that in addition to all the active service here mentioned he contrived to find time to write books, some of them about Tactics, some about Sport, some describing his

participation in or conduct of important military operations, one is amazed to find that a single brain can compass so many things. But the amazement deepens when it is remembered that in addition to all this Baden-Powell also found time to do many other things—to act, sing, paint, etch, make innumerable sketches, hunt, shoot, yacht, get up theatrical entertainments and stage-manage them, attend foreign military evolutions, and travel extensively. To an ordinary mortal the question must needs occur,—How does he manage to do it all? To that the only possible answer can be that Baden-Powell, in addition to possessing many qualities denied to other men, is blessed with yet another of which most men are not so keen to take advantage —that of always being occupied, and of being thoroughly absorbed in the thing that occupies him. He has never shown this quality more thoroughly, perhaps, than during those portions of his career when duty called him to play—or rather, work—the part of regimental officer. Most of us know how such a part may be played—how the officer in barracks may spend his time in doing a minimum of duty and a maximum of pleasure, how he may ignore the men under him, and generally behave as if the service were a bore and all its surroundings unpalatable. Some officers do order their lives after such a fashion; others again affect a languid indifference to things in general, which is scarcely less hurtful to the best interests of the service. Baden-Powell, as regimental officer, was neither bored nor indifferent. He was always doing something for his men, interesting himself in games and amusements, lecturing to them, acting, reciting, and making fun for them, and there was not a man in his troop who did not feel that he had a friend in his energetic captain. It is not difficult to realize what all this means. The man who can command the respect and affection of those serving under him to such an extent that they would go anywhere and do anything at his lightest word must needs possess a personal magnetism which proves him worthy of leading not merely a troop but an army.

## IV.

### SCOUT AND SPORTSMAN

In his youthful days Baden-Powell was very fond of exploring such unknown regions as are accessible to a small boy, and it is related of him that nothing gave him so much pleasure as to find himself and his companions lost and his own ingenuity taxed to restore them to the paths of safety. When he arrived at years of discretion this passion for wandering did not desert him—on the contrary it increased within him, and finally culminated in a devotion to scouting, which has made his name famous all over the world. It is needless to say that in this matter, as in most other matters closely affecting him, Baden-Powell has largely depended upon himself for success and mastery. As he remarks in his "Aids to Scouting," a little military handbook the proofs of which accompanied the last despatches got through the Boer lines at Mafeking, "Scouting is a thing that can be learnt, but cannot be taught. A man must pick up much of it for himself by his own effort." How much of it Baden-Powell has *not* picked up for himself can only be guessed by a careful perusal of this little treatise, which is

Following up the Spoor.

packed with the results of keen observation, and gives one perhaps a better notion of what its author really is as a born soldier and leader of soldiers than anything else of his. It was, no doubt, with sublime unconsciousness that he describes himself in describing the perfect scout, the man of pluck, self-reliance, and discretion, the man who can use his ears and eyes, his sense of smell and touch, who can keep himself hidden and track others, who can make his way across strange lands and take good care of himself and his horse, and who in everything he does is always dominated by the desire to secure valuable information. And it is with perhaps still more sublime unconsciousness that he insists that the first three necessary qualifications spring from—confidence in one's own powers.

Of the many wonderful things done by Baden-Powell nothing seems to me so wonderful as the way in which the man who has had so many and such varied occupations has perfected himself in scouting. He seems to be all eyes and ears, to never lose cognizance of anything that happens, and to give an attention to little points of detail which less extraordinary men would feel tempted to ignore. "It should be a point of honour with a scout," he remarks, "that nobody sees any object that he has not already seen for himself. For this your eyes must be never resting, continually glancing round in every direction, and trained to see objects in the far distance. A scout must have eyes in the back of his head. Riding with a really trained scout, such as Buffalo Bill or Burnham, you will notice that while he talks with you his eyes scarcely look you in the face for a moment, they keep glancing from point to point of the country round from sheer force of habit." Then he quotes a slight incident from his own experience to show how a little reflection and common-sense will suggest the most likely point for which to look for the presence of an enemy. He and a Shikari in Kashmir were having a match as to which of them could see furthest. The Shikari, pointing out a hillside rising at some distance, inquired if his opponent could say how many cattle were grazing along its slopes. Baden-Powell

could only see the cattle with great difficulty, but he presently astonished the Shikari by asking him if he could see the man who was herding the cattle. He could not see the man himself, but he had argued the thing out and knew where the man was. First of all, where there were cattle there would be a herd in charge of them. Secondly, it was most likely that he would be up-hill, above them. Thirdly, up-hill above them stood a solitary tree. Fourthly, the day was very hot, and the tree was the only means of affording shade. Because of these reasons the man must be under the tree—and when Baden-Powell and the Shikari brought their glasses into operation there the man was.

An instance of Baden-Powell's careful attention to small details is given in the same chapter of "Aids to Scouting." "I was once acting as scout for a party in a desert country," he says, "where we were getting done up for want of water. I had gone out two or three miles ahead to where I thought the ground seemed to slope slightly downwards, but except a very shallow, dry water-course, there was no sign of water. As I was making my way slowly back again, I noticed a scratching in the sand, evidently recently made by a buck, and the sand thrown up was of a darker colour, therefore damper, than that on the surface. I dismounted and scooped up more with my hands, and found the under-soil quite moist, so water was evidently near, and could probably be got by digging. But at that moment two pigeons sprang up and flew away from under a rock near by; full of hope, I went to the spot and found there a small pool of water, which yielded sufficient for the immediate requirements of the party. Had I not noticed the buck-scratching, or the pigeons flying up, we should have had a painful toil of many miles before we struck on the river, which we eventually did come to."

There are abundant evidences in "Aids to Scouting" of the extraordinary patience which its author possesses, and of the way in which he has exercised it in perfecting himself as a scout. He mentions, as if it were a mere nothing, that he once took up a position amongst some rocks overhanging a path, and so close

to it that he could have touched passers-by with a fishing-rod, and remained there for two hours in order to see how many people who passed him would perceive him. He took no pains to conceal himself, but merely sat down, a little above the level of a man's eye. During the two hours fifty-four persons passed him, and he was only noticed by eleven of them. But how many of us are there who have the patience to remain motionless for two hours?—all for the sake of an experiment! But Baden-Powell's patience gains a great deal in its value to him as a scout by its being linked with a marvellous power of deduction. He likes to find out everything he can about all that he sees, keeps a sharp eye on the people he meets, tries to deduce what they are from their personal appearance, outward signs, and chance observations, and is all the better satisfied if he finds that his conclusions are true. When he was in India he used to go out in the early mornings looking for what he could find and deducing arguments from signs and things thus found. He gives numerous illustrations of this exercise of his logical faculties in "Aids to Scouting," of which the following is a typical example:—

EXAMPLE OF DEDUCTION FROM SIGNS.

("Aids to Scouting," p. 75.)

*Locality.*—A mountain path in Kashmir.

*Weather.*—Dry and fine. There had been heavy rain two days before, but the ground had dried the same night.

*Signs observed.*—Passing a tree stump, I noticed a stone lying on it about the size of a cocoa-nut. I wondered for the moment how it came to be there, and soon discovered the reason.

On the stump, and also sticking to the stone, were some bits of bruised walnut-rind, green, but dried up. Bits of shell of about four walnuts were lying about the ground near a leaning rock about 30 yards away south of the stump. The only walnut-tree in sight was about 150 yards north of the stump.

At the foot of the stump, just where a man would stand to use the stone on it, was a cake of hardened mud that had evidently fallen from the sole of a grass sandal.

DEDUCTION.

*That a man was carrying a load.*—Had it been anyone not carrying a load he or she would not have sat down on the stump or close to it; instead of that, he had gone 30 yards away to where a slanting rock was; this would support his load while he leant back against it to rest and eat his walnuts (whose shells were lying there). Women do not carry loads on their backs.

*He was on a long journey.*—As he wore sandals instead of bare feet.

*Towards the south.*—He had got the walnuts 150 yards north of the stump, had stopped there to break them with the stone, and had gone 30 yards further on his road to the rock to eat them.

*He had passed there two days ago.*—The cake of mud off his sandal showed that when he was there the ground was wet, and the dried husk of the walnuts corroborated this deduction.

*Total information.*—A man had passed here two days ago, on a long journey, carrying a load southward.

It goes without saying that Baden-Powell has had plenty of adventures and excitement out of his love of scouting. How often his life has been in such danger that it was apparently not worth a moment's purchase, it is probable he himself does not know. But if there is anybody who knows what an extraordinarily watchful life it is that has thus risked itself a thousand times, it is the Matabele against whom Baden-Powell brought his keen senses to bear during the campaign of 1896, and who conferred upon him a sobriquet which is likely to stick to him as long as his old nickname of "Bathing-Towel," or the modern "B.-P." of admiring crowds. Writing of his work during July, 1896 ("The Matabele Campaign," p. 127-8), he says: "Many of the strongholds to which I had at first learned the way with patrols, I have now visited again by myself at nights, in order to further locate the positions of their occupants. In this way I have actually got to know the country and the way through it better by night than by day, that is to say, by certain landmarks and leading stars whose respectively changed appearance or absence in daylight is apt to

be misleading. The enemy, of course, often see me, but are luckily very suspicious, and look upon me as a bait to some trap, and are therefore slow to come at me. They often shout to me; and yesterday my boy, who was with my horse, told me they were shouting to each other that 'Impeesa' was there—i.e., 'The Wolf,' or, as he translated it, the beast, that does not sleep, but sneaks about at night." Since then a good many folk have learnt much of the Wolf that does not sleep. But if this same sleepless Wolf were asked if there had not been many compensations for his sneaking about at night, he would probably be able to say that for every moment of anxiety he had spent a thousand of satisfaction. To how many men leading hum-drum stay-at-home lives is it ever granted to see one such picture as that Baden-Powell records in his journal under date July 29th, 1896? ("The Matabele Campaign," p. 175.)

"To-day, when out scouting by myself, being at some distance from my boy and the horses, I lay for a short rest and a quiet look-out among some rocks and grass overlooking a little stream; and I saw a charming picture. Presently there was a slight rattle of trinkets, and a swish of the tall yellow grass, followed by the sudden apparition of a naked Matabele warrior standing glistening among the rocks of the streamlet, within thirty yards of me. His white war ornaments—the ball of clipped feathers on his brow, and the long white cow's-tail plumes which depended from his arms and knees—contrasted strongly with his rich brown skin. His kilt of wild cat-skins and monkeys' tails swayed round his loins. His left hand bore his assegais and knobkerrie beneath the great dapple ox-hide shield; and, in his right, a yellow walking-staff.

"He stood for almost a minute perfectly motionless, like a statue cast in bronze, his head turned from me, listening for any suspicious sound. Then, with a swift and easy movement, he laid his arms and shield noiselessly upon the rocks, and, dropping on all fours beside a pool, he dipped his muzzle down and drank just like an animal. I could hear the thirsty sucking of his lips

from where I lay. He drank and drank as though he never meant to stop, and when at last his frame could hold no more, he rose with evident reluctance. He picked his weapons up, and then stood again to listen. Hearing nothing, he turned and sharply moved away. In three swift strides he disappeared within the grass as silently as he had come. I had been so taken with the spectacle that I felt no desire to shoot at him—especially as he was carrying no gun himself."

But lest those who read these words should imagine that the life of a scout is all pleasurable excitement with a little danger thrown in to give it an added zest, let them read an extract from one of Baden-Powell's letters to the *Daily Chronicle*, to which he at one time acted as special correspondent. It describes setting out on reconnaissance with a patrol :—

"Is it the cooing of doves that wakes me from dreamland to the stern reality of a scrubby blanket and the cold night air of the upland veldt ? A plaintive, continuous moan, moan, reminds me that I am at one of our outpost forts beyond Buluwayo, where my bedroom is under the lee of the sail (waggon tilt) which forms the wall of the hospital. And through the flimsy screen there wells the moan of a man who is dying. At last the weary wailing slowly sobs itself away, and the suffering of another mortal is ended. He is at peace. It is only another poor trooper gone. Three years ago he was costing his father so much a year at Eton ; he was in the eleven, too—and all for this.

"I roll myself tighter in my dew-chilled rug, and turn to dream afresh of what a curious world I'm in. My rest is short, and time arrives for turning out, as now the moon is rising. A curious scene it is, as here in shadow, there in light, close-packed within the narrow circuit of the fort, the men are lying, muffled, deeply sleeping at their posts. It's etiquette to move and talk as softly as we are able, and even harsh-voiced sentries drop their challenge to a whisper when there is no doubt of one's identity. We give our horses a few handfuls of mealies, while we dip our pannikins into the great black 'billy,' where there's always cocoa on the

simmer for the guard. And presently we saddle up, the six of us, and lead our horses out; and close behind us follow, in a huddled, shivering file, the four native scouts, guarding among them two Matabele prisoners, handcuffed wrist to wrist, who are to be our guides.

"Down into the deep, dark kloof below the fort, where the air strikes with an icy chill, we cross the shallow spruit, then rise and turn along its farther bank, following a twisting, stony track that leads down the valley. Our horses, though they purposely are left unshod, make a prodigious clatter as they stumble adown the rough uneven way. From force of habit rather than from fear of listening enemies, we drop our voices to a whisper, and this gives a feeling of alertness and expectancy such as would find us well prepared on an emergency. But we are many miles as yet from their extremest outposts, and, luckily for us, these natives are the soundest of sleepers, so that one might almost in safety pass with clattering horses within a quarter of a mile of them.

. . . . . .

". . . Dawn is at hand. The hills along our left (we are travelling south) loom darker now against the paling sky. Before us, too, we see the hazy blank of the greater valley into which our present valley runs. Suddenly there's a pause, and all our party halts. Look back! there, high up on a hill, beneath whose shadow we have passed, there sparkles what looks like a ruddy star, which glimmers, bobs, goes out, and then flares anew. It is a watchfire, and our foes are waking up to warm themselves and to keep their watch. Yonder on another hill sparks up a second fire, and on beyond, another. They are waking up, but all too late; we've passed them by, and now are in their ground. Forward! We press on, and ere the day has dawned we have emerged from out the defile into the open land beyond. This is a wide and undulating plain, some five miles across to where it runs up into mountain peaks, the true Matopos. We turn aside and clamber up among some hills just as the sun is rising, until we reach the ashes of a kraal that has been lately burned.

The kraal is situated in a cup among the hills, and from the koppies round our native scouts can keep a good look-out in all directions. Here we call a halt for breakfast, and after slackening girths, we go into the cattle kraal to look for corn to give our horses. (The Kaffirs always hide their grain in pits beneath the ground of the 'cattle kraal' or yard in which the oxen are herded at night.) Many of the grain-pits have already been opened, but still are left half-filled, and some have not been touched—and then in one—well, we cover up the mouth with a flat stone and logs of wood. The body of a girl lies doubled up within. A few days back a party of some friendlies, men and women, had revisited this kraal, their home, to get some food to take back to their temporary refuge near our fort. The Matabele saw them, and just when they were busy drawing grain, pounced in upon them, assegaing three—all women—and driving off the rest as fast as they could go. This was but an everyday incident of outpost life."

It may be that Baden-Powell would never have been so great an exponent of the art and science of scouting if he had not always been a thoroughly good sportsman. To sport his devotion has invariably been marked since the days when he first felt the charm of wild life. He hunts and shoots, and in Mrs. Baden-Powell's house in St. George's Place there are innumerable trophies of his skill, including lions and tigers. Perhaps his favourite sport is pig-sticking, of which he became a devotee soon after he joined the 13th Hussars in India. In 1883 he won the Kadir Cup—the highest distinction open to followers of this very fascinating sport—and in 1885 he published his work on "Pig-sticking," from which the following characteristically written account of a fight which he once witnessed between a tiger and a boar is extracted :—

". . . He eagerly watched the development of this strange *rencontre*. The tiger was now crouching low, crawling stealthily round and round the boar, who changed front with every movement of his lithe and sinewy adversary, keeping his determined

head and sharp, deadly tusks ever facing his stealthy and treacherous foe. The bristles of the boar's back were up at a right angle from the strong spine. The wedge-shaped head poised on the strong neck and thick rampart of muscular shoulder was bent low, and the whole attitude of the body betokened full alertness and angry resoluteness. In their circlings the two brutes were now nearer to each other and nearer to us, and thus we could mark every movement with greater precision. The tiger was now growling and showing his teeth; and all this, that takes such a time to tell, was but the work of a few short minutes. Crouching now still lower, till he seemed almost flat on the ground, and gathering his sinewy limbs beneath his lithe, lean body, he suddenly startled the stillness with a loud roar, and quick as lightning sprang upon the boar. For a brief minute the struggle was thrilling in its intense excitement. With one swift, dexterous sweep of the strong, ready paw, the tiger fetched the boar a terrific slap right across the jaw, which made the strong beast reel, but with a hoarse grunt of resolute defiance, with two or three sharp digs of the strong head and neck, and swift, cutting blows of the cruel, gashing tusks, he seemed to make a hole or two in the tiger's coat, marking it with more stripes than Nature has ever painted there; and presently both combatants were streaming with gore. The tremendous buffet of the sharp claws had torn flesh and skin away from off the boar's cheek and forehead, leaving a great ugly flap hanging over his face and half blinding him. The pig was now on his mettle. With another hoarse grunt he made straight for the tiger, who very dexterously eluded the charge, and, lithe and quick as a cat after a mouse, doubled almost on himself, and alighted clean on the boar's back, inserting his teeth above the shoulders, tearing with his claws, and biting out great mouthfuls of flesh from the quivering carcase of his maddened antagonist. He seemed now to be having all the best of it, so much so that the boar discreetly stumbled and fell forward, whether by accident or design I know not, but the effect was to bring the tiger clean

over his head, sprawling clumsily on the ground . . . the tables were turned. Getting his forefeet on the tiger's prostrate carcase, the boar now gave two or three short, ripping gashes with his strong white tusks, almost disembowelling his foe, and then exhausted seemingly by the effort, apparently giddy and sick, he staggered aside and lay down, panting and champing his tusks, but still defiant . . . ." One can conceive, after reading this passage, that Baden-Powell must needs have a considerable respect for the wild pig of India, and find in him a foe worthy his own skill and courage.

An extract from the journal which he kept during the Matabele Campaign shows Baden-Powell in the character of lion-hunter:—

"*October* 10*th* (to be marked with a red mark when I can get a red pencil).—Jackson and a native boy accompanied me scouting this morning; we then started off at three in the morning, so that by dawn we were in sight of one of the hills we expected might be occupied by Paget, and where we hoped to see his fires. We saw none there; but on our way, in moving round the hill which overlooks our camp, we saw a match struck high up near the top of the mountain. This one little spark told us a good deal. It showed that the enemy were there; that they were awake and alert (I say 'they' because one nigger would not be up there by himself in the dark), and that they were aware of our force being at Posselt's (or otherwise they would not be occupying that hill). However, they could not see anything of us, as it was then quite dark; and we went further on among the mountains. In the early morning light we crossed the deep river-bed of the Umchingwe River, and, in doing so, we noticed the fresh spoor of a lion in the sand. We went on, and had a good look at the enemy's stronghold; and on our way back, as we approached this river-bed, we agreed to go quietly, in case the lion should be moving about in it. On looking down over the bank, my heart jumped into my mouth, when I saw a grand old brute just walking in behind a bush. Jackson could not see him, but was off his horse as quick as I was, and ready

with his gun; too ready, indeed, for the moment that the lion appeared, walking majestically out from behind the bush that had hidden him, Jackson fired hurriedly, striking the ground under his foot, and, as we afterwards discovered, knocking off one of his claws. The lion tossed up his shaggy head and looked at us in dignified surprise. Then I fired, and hit him in the ribs with a leaden bullet from my Lee-Metford. He reeled, sprang round, and staggered a few paces, when Jackson, who was firing a Martini-Henry, let him have one in the shoulder; this knocked him over sideways, and he turned about, growling savagely.

"I could scarcely believe that we had actually got a lion at last, but resolved to make sure of it; so, telling Jackson not to fire unless it was necessary (for fear of spoiling the skin with the larger bullet of the Martini), I got down closer to the beast, and fired a shot at the back of his neck as he turned his head away from me. This went through his spine, and came out through the lower jaw, killing him dead. We were pretty delighted at our success, but our nigger was mad with happiness, for a dead lion—provided he is not a man-eater—has many invaluable gifts for a Kaffir, in the shape of love-philtres, charms against disease or injury, and medicines that produce bravery. It was quite delightful to shake hands with the mighty paws of the dead lion, and to pull at his magnificent tawny mane, and to look into his great deep yellow eyes. And then we set to work to skin him; two skinning, while the other kept watch in case of the enemy sneaking up to catch us while we were thus occupied. In skinning him, we found that he was very fat, and also that he had been much wounded by porcupines, portions of whose quills had pierced the skin and lodged in his flesh in several places. Our nigger cut out the eyes, gall-bladder, and various bits of the lion's anatomy, as fetish medicine. I filled my carbine bucket with some of the fat, as I knew my two boys, Diamond and M'tini, would very greatly value it. Then, after hiding the head in a neighbouring bush, we packed the skin on to one of the ponies, and returned to camp mightily pleased with ourselves.

"On arrival there, the excitement among the boys was very great, for, as we rode into camp, we pretended we had merely shot a buck; but when Diamond turned out to take my horse from me, he suddenly recognized the skin, and his eyes almost started from his head as he put his hand over his mouth and ejaculated, 'Ow! Ingonyama!' ('Great Scott! a lion!') Then, grinning with excitement, he asked leave to go and get some more of it. In vain I told him that it was eight miles away, and close under the enemy's stronghold. He seized up an assegai and started off at a steady trot along our back-spoor. And very soon one nigger after another was doubling out of camp after him, to get a share of the booty. In the evening they came back quite happy with various tit-bits, and also the head. The heart was boiled and made into soup, which was greedily partaken of by every boy in camp, with a view to gaining courage. Diamond assured me that the bits of fat, &c., of which he was now the proud possessor, would buy him several cattle when he got back to Natal."

In addition to his fame as a sticker of pigs, a hunter of hogs, a slayer of lions and tigers, Baden-Powell has also greatly distinguished himself as a hunter of big game and an expert polo-player. But there is scarcely anything in the shape of sport and the pursuit of outdoor life which he does not care for. Nature in her wildest and loneliest moods he loves with a whole-hearted devotion, and it is easy to perceive when reading his books and journals that he knows her in all her phases and attitudes, and loves her in them all. It would be strange if it were not so in the case of a man who has so often laid down in the loneliness of the African veldt and slept as trustfully as if he were in his own bed—always taking care, though, with his usual caution, to be sure that his revolver is under his knees, and its lanyard round his neck. To such as him the open air is as the breath of heaven to the saint, and communion with the wild places and wild life of the earth as meat to the hungry.

## V.

### THE KINDLY HUMORIST

It seems to me that the distinguishing quality of Baden-Powell's life and character, so far as the man in the street has been permitted to inform himself about them, is a sense of humour, so strong as to dominate everything else within him. He is essentially the man who, whatever happens, will come up smiling. It is only necessary to look at him to feel sure of that—there is something in the tall, spare figure, in the well-cut, determined face and quick, observant, fun-loving eyes which gives the beholder a sense of very pleasant security. Everybody who knows Baden-Powell bears testimony to the great and unvarying quality of his humour. It is the humour of a great nature—now exuberant even to the verge of mischief, now dry and caustic enough to suit an epigram-loving philosopher, now of a whimsical sort that makes it all the more charming. But it has a further quality which may not be overlooked—it is always kindly. Only a good-natured, sunny-tempered, laughter-loving man could or would have done all the things which are credited to Baden-Powell—things which have been done more for the pleasure which a great nature always feels in lightening life for others than for the mere desire of provoking laughter. The man who was always ready as regimental officer to amuse his men by his powers as an actor, maker of jokes, and general entertainer, differs only from the schoolboy who was always full of fun and high spirits in the sense that his abilities were being turned to more serious account.

The humour which is Baden-Powell's great characteristic is of much variety and shows itself in the most astonishing ways. It

is wonderfully whimsical, and sometimes appears when one would never dream of seeing it. What a whimsical notion, for instance, to assemble the European children, on joining his regiment in India, and march them through the streets to the tune of "The Girl I left behind me," played upon an ocarina! Or to send a dispatch from Mafeking which laconically said, "All well, FOUR hours' bombardment—one dog killed." Or to present himself at a picture exhibition, and on being informed that he must leave his stick outside, to turn away and return a moment later limping so badly that the tabooed stick was perforce allowed to accompany him. Or to seat himself, a full-grown English officer, upon a kerb-stone and pretend to sob bitterly until a constable inquired as to his woes, and then to inform the astonished man that he had just fallen out of his nurse's arms, and that the unfeeling woman had gone on and left him. This sort of thing is not merely whimsical, but in the last two cases closely allied to practical joking. But it is characteristic of the man who, when Commandant Eloff surrendered to him at Mafeking, said, "How do you do?—come and have some dinner." That strong, saving sense of humour—which really means a total lack of miserable, morbid self-consciousness—must have been strong in Baden-Powell at a very early age. There is a story told of him in his very youthful days which shows that when little more than a baby his sense of humour was already strong. While staying at the seaside he had the ill-luck to fall into a somewhat deep hole in the rocks, just when the tide was coming in, and was promptly treated to a ducking, which, as he phrases it, "comed up all over my head," and made him think that he should never "tum out adain." But he fought, tooth and nail, to "tum out adain," and was met a few minutes later, a dripping and bedraggled figure, by a lady to whom he coolly explained what had happened. There was no howling and crying about the thing now that it was over—that was Baden-Powell's sense of humour. Many a long year after that we find him jotting down in his journal some particulars of a narrow escape from sudden death, or at least from serious injury.

When the mule battery moved off from Beresford's position, after the fight of August 5th, 1896, during the proceedings of the Matabele Campaign, one of the mules carried a carbine strapped on its pack-saddle. The carbine had very carelessly been left loaded, and at full cock, and in passing a bush it was discharged, the bullet nearly hitting Baden-Powell, who was close behind. Most men would have made this incident the text for nauseous thankings of Providence, for self-reflection, and the like—Baden-Powell merely remarks: "Many a man has nearly been shot by an ass, but I claim to have been nearly shot by a mule." It is a fortunate gift to possess, this saving sense of humour, but it strikes some folk as gruesome, all the same. There is a story told to the effect that when the siege of Mafeking began, some individual who had offended very seriously was brought before Baden-Powell. The delinquent's account of what happened is full of charm. "He told me that if I ever did it again he would have me shot immediately—*and then he began to whistle a tune!*" Exactly—but the wrongdoer did not know that it is one of the defender of Mafeking's great beliefs that when one is very much bothered by naughty people or awkward things it is a very good thing to—whistle a tune. What the Boers thought of Baden-Powell's humour we shall possibly find out in time to come. Commandant Eloff, captive at last, and receiving his captor's off-hand, cheery invitation to dine, was, no doubt, not surprised by it, for he had already experienced something of his antagonist's methods of regarding things. During the siege Eloff wrote to Baden-Powell saying that he learnt that the beleaguered garrison amused itself with balls, concerts, tournaments, cricket matches, and the like on Sundays, and hinted that he and his men would very much like to come in and take part, life being pretty dull amongst the Boer forces. To this Baden-Powell replied that he thought the return match had better be postponed until the one then proceeding was finished, and suggested that as Cronje, Snyman, and others had been well tried without effect on the garrison, which was then 200 and not out, there had better be another change of bowling. All

which Commander Eloff, no doubt, read with mixed feelings, in which, let us hope, a sense of amused agreement with his correspondent predominated.

Of purely amusing stories about Baden-Powell there have been quite enough given in the public prints to fill a small volume. Whether it is exactly pertinent to the understanding of his character to continually harp on the mirth-provoking side of it is a question which need not be answered, but no one doubts that a great man is made all the more human and all the more attractive to ordinary mortals if he happens to possess a wholesome love of fun. Love of fun, even of what very young ladies call mere frivol, appears to have possessed Baden-Powell ever since he was a small boy. He was always in for a lark. There was a master at the Charterhouse whose usual answer to any boy who bothered him with a question was a more or less testy, "Don't you know I'm engaged?" It happened to be noised abroad that this gentleman had succeeded in persuading some young lady to share his fortunes, and Baden-Powell was one of the first to hear the news.

Britannia.

His brilliant, and one may righteously say mischievous mind, conceived a brilliant notion. He approached the Benedict-to-be as the latter stood amidst a group of other masters, and made some remark or request. Quick came the usual question: "Don't you know I'm engaged?" "Bathing-Towel" assumed one of the looks which only he could assume. "*Oh*, SIR!" he exclaimed in accents that expressed—himself best knew what.

There is another story told of him which illustrates his humour in its mischievous best. He was staying at a country house

whose mistress was in despair one evening because a professional conjurer on whose services she had been relying had not arrived at the time when his performance was announced to commence. She appealed to Baden-Powell to do something amusing until the man arrived. With characteristic readiness to step into a breach, Baden-Powell mounted the platform, and having announced himself as an amateur conjurer, invited any gentleman present to be so obliging as to lend him a silk hat. Some unsuspecting and innocent gentleman "obliged" in the manner requested. Baden-Powell, having carefully examined the head-gear thus entrusted to him, tore out the lining, cut off the brim, and then slowly cut the rest of the article into very small pieces. He then made a mysterious request for a tray of some particular pattern, and while the house was being ransacked for what he wanted, he amused his audience with the glib utterances of the professional entertainer. At last the tray came, and Baden-Powell heaped the fragments upon it, covered them over, and looked solemnly at his audience. "You have seen me cut up the hat," he said, "and you know that the pieces are under this covering. The next part of the performance will be to restore the hat whole to its owner. As the real conjurer has just arrived, I will leave that part of the performance to him." And therewith this very boyish man bowed himself off the platform.

It is just because he is a boyish man that Baden-Powell is what he is. Who could doubt that a man so light-hearted, so full of bright good humour, so sunny of disposition, could fail to uphold the honour of his country, considering that to these desirable qualities he adds the strength, skill, sagacity, and indomitable bravery of the born soldier? I have always thought that the most characteristic thing which Baden-Powell has ever said was when he replied to Cronje's demand for a surrender: "Tell General Cronje that I will let him know when we have had enough." Enough?—it may well be doubted if the man whom the Matabele aptly termed "The Wolf that never Sleeps" will ever have enough until he sleeps for ever.

## Part II.

# AN EXPEDITION AND A CAMPAIGN

## I.

### THE ASHANTI EXPEDITION, 1895-6

Amongst the vast collection of relics, trophies, and curiosities which Baden-Powell has housed at his mother's residence in London there is one object at sight of which those who know its history may be forgiven for feeling some slight qualms. It is a large brass basin, about five feet in diameter, ornamented with four lions and with a number of round knobs all round its rim. If the spirits of blood-lust, of unholiness, and cruelty abide anywhere on earth, they ought to be found in this bowl, which Baden-Powell found at Bantama when he went out with the Ashanti Expedition of 1895-6, and which in its time had received the blood of countless victims to the inordinate love of human sacrifice which has distinguished the kings of the Ashanti empire for centuries. It looks, that bowl, as innocent as an ordinary kitchen utensil as it hangs in its place on the wall, surrounded by trophies of a more fearsome nature, but not even the guillotine of the Reign of Terror had seen and smelt more blood than had run over its rim to putrefy in its depths and to be eventually turned, mixed with certain herbs, into fetish medicines. To Baden-Powell, whenever he sees it—he has had small chance of seeing it since he brought it back to England, though!—it must needs recall many things in connection with that foul corner of the earth into which he journeyed some five years ago in order to assist in bringing a reign of bloodshed and violence to an end.

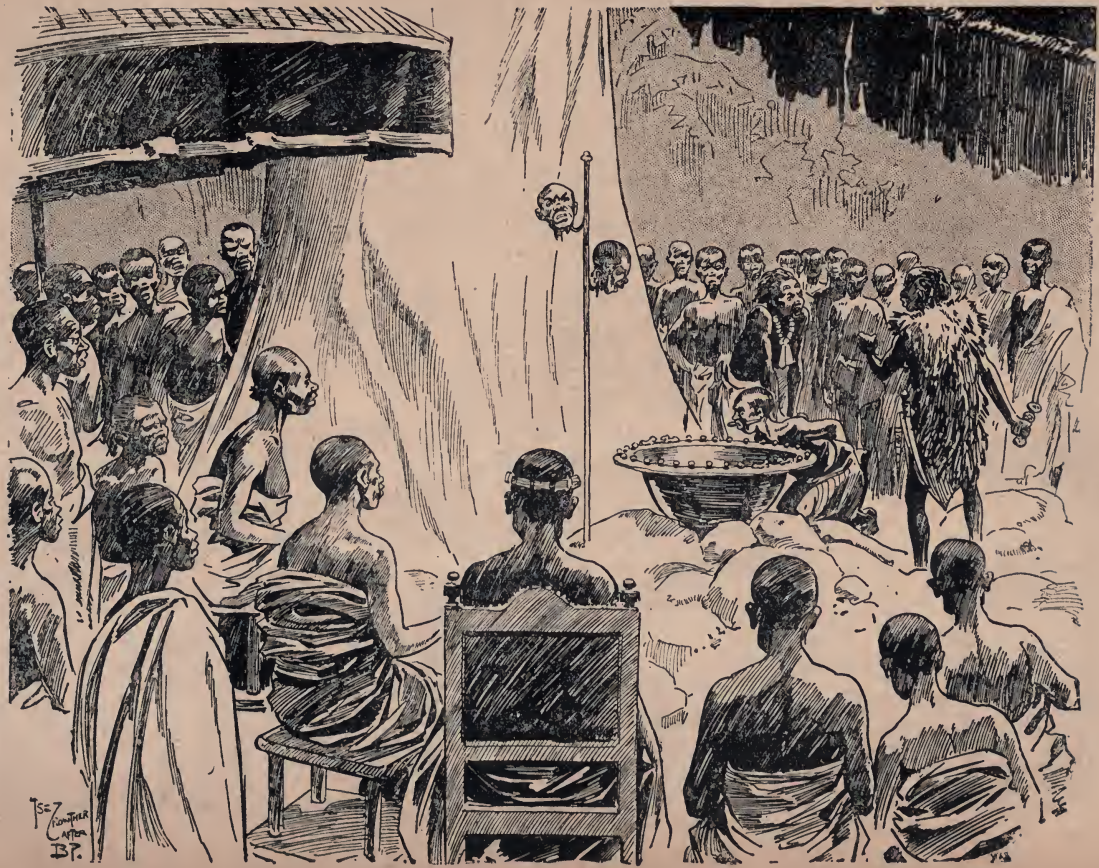
SKETCH MAP of the MARCH TO KUMASSI
showing the Camping Places
22 Jan Bokro
17 Jan. Maheer
Bantama
KUMASSI
(800 Ft)
15 Jan
15 Jan
Ordasu
15 Jan
Dede Siwa
River Ordah
14 Jan
22 Jan
12 Jan Edunku
11 Jan
Esumeja
Amoaful
23 Jan
BEKWA
4 Jan.
ABODOM
Essian
Qwanta
ADANSI
HILLS (1500 Ft)
Qwisa
3 Jan
Brofu Edru
2 Jan
24 Jan.
DENSE FOREST
Akusirem
29 Dec Fumsu
ADANSI
27 Dec Essiaman
25 Jan.
25 Dec Tobiassi
Prah
20 Dec
PRAHSU
River
Baraku
26 Jan.
19 Dec
Yancumassi
DENSE FOREST
Suta
27 Jan.
18 Dec MANSU
17 Dec. Dunkwa
28 Jan
Akroful
Low Hills covered with bush
16 Dec Jakuma
29 Jan
13 Dec
3 Feb
CAPE COAST CASTLE
ELMINA
DISTANCE from Cape Coast Castle to Prahsu : 71 MILES
" " " " Kumassi 145 "
Country undulating, swampy hollows, dense forest
From Edunku the Levy advanced on Kumassi in
three parties simultaneously by the paths shown above.

We are often told that we, as a nation, are much too ready to interfere with the affairs of other folk, and there are candid people amongst us who are not afraid of hinting that our interference is usually with nations not quite so big and powerful as ourselves—that we are, in short, something like the school-boy bully who wants to fight, but only with a boy several sizes smaller than himself. There were whisperings and hintings of this sort when we sent out our Ashanti Expedition of 1895-6—but no nation, surely, ever had better reasons for undertaking such an expedition. There were more reasons than one why it should be undertaken, and every reason was a most potent one, but one towered above all in its strength and urgency. Human life was being sacrificed in Ashanti to an extent which civilized folk can scarcely comprehend. The following extract from Baden-Powell's work on the Ashanti Expedition of 1895-6 gives one some notion of what was going on in and around Kumassi before the British Government stepped in:—

"Any great public function was seized on as an excuse for human sacrifices. There was the annual 'yam custom,' or harvest festival, at which large numbers of victims were often offered to the gods. Then the king went every quarter to pay his devotions to the shades of his ancestors at Bantama, and this demanded the deaths of twenty men over the great bowl on each occasion. On the death of any great personage, two of the household slaves were at once killed on the threshold of the door, in order to attend their master immediately in his new life, and his grave was afterwards lined with the bodies of more slaves who were to form his retinue in the spirit world. It was thought all the better if, during the burial, one of the attendant mourners could be stunned by a club, and dropped, still breathing, into the grave before it was filled in. In the case of a great lady dying, slave-girls were the victims. This custom of sacrifice at funerals was called 'washing the grave.' On the death of a king the custom of washing the grave involved enormous sacrifices. Then sacrifices were also made to propitiate the gods when war was

about to be entered upon, or other trouble was impending. Victims were also killed to deter an enemy from approaching the capital: sometimes they were impaled and set up on the path, with their hand pointing to the enemy and bidding him to retire. At other times the victim was beheaded and the head replaced looking in the wrong direction; or he was buried alive in the pathway, standing upright, with only his head above ground, to remain thus until starvation, or—what was infinitely worse—the ants made an end of him. Then there was a death penalty for the infraction of various laws. For instance, anybody who found a nugget of gold and who did not send it at once to the king was liable to decapitation; so also was anybody who picked up anything of value lying on the parade-ground, or who sat down in the shade of the fetish tree at Bantama. Indeed, if the king desired an execution at any time, he did not look far for an excuse. It is even said that on one occasion he preferred a richer colour in the red stucco on the walls of the palace, and that for this purpose the blood of four hundred virgins was used. I have purposely refrained elsewhere from giving numbers, because, although our informants supplied them, West African natives are notoriously inexact in this respect. The victims of sacrifices were almost always slaves or prisoners of war. Slaves were often sent in to the king in lieu of tribute from his kinglets and chiefs, or as a fine for minor delinquencies. Travelling traders of other tribes, too, were frequently called upon to pay customs dues with a slave or two, and sometimes their own lives were forfeited.

"When once a man had been selected and seized for execution, there were only two ways by which he could evade it. One was to repeat the 'king's oath'—a certain formula of words—before they could gag him; the other was to break loose from his captors and run as far as the Bantama-Kumassi cross road; if he could reach this point before being overtaken, he was allowed to go free. In order to ensure against their prisoners getting off by either of these methods, the executioners used to spring on the intended victim from behind, and while one bound his hands behind his back,



Human Sacrifice at Bantama.

another drove a knife through both his cheeks, which effectually prevented him from opening his mouth to speak, and in this horrible condition he had to await his turn for execution. When the time came, the executioners, mad with blood, would make a rush for him and force him on to the bowl or stool, whichever served as the block. Then one of them, using a large kind of butcher's knife, would cut into the spine, and so carve the head off. As a rule, the victims were killed without extra torture, but if the order was given for an addition of this kind, the executioners vied with each other in devising original and fiendish forms of suffering. At great executions torture was apparently resorted to in order to please the spectators. It certainly seems that the people had by frequent indulgence become imbued with a kind of blood-lust, and that to them an execution was as attractive an entertainment as is a bull-fight to a Spaniard or a football match to an Englishman."

On November 14th, 1895, Baden-Powell received orders to proceed on active service, and a month later he was at Cape Coast Castle, charged with the onerous duties of getting the punitive force through from that point to Kumassi. What a task it was that lay before him few people can imagine. Between Cape Coast Castle and Kumassi the road was nothing but a narrow pathway, leading for the greater part of its 150 miles through primeval forest, dark, pestilential, and infested by the tsetse fly. To plunge an army of white troops into such a district was to court immediate trouble in the way of sickness, if not of death; accordingly it was necessary that many things should be thought of, and thought of with a thoroughness and care which the stay-at-home man can scarcely conceive. The details relating to transport, commissariat, reserve stores, engineering and telegraphic work, hospital provision, equipment for making roads and building bridges, had all to be considered and debated. Before he reached Cape Coast Castle, Baden-Powell had considered them all, and had put his ideas about them on paper. When he landed there innumerable

difficulties lay before him, such difficulties that, as he says, "One could sit down and laugh to tears at the absurdity of the thing," but going on the old West Coast proverb, "Softly, softly, catchee monkey," he gradually reduced chaos into order, and at last found himself in command of "a jabbering, laughing mob," whose only uniform was—a red fez! All the way to Prahsu, seventy miles off, did Baden-Powell and his assistant, Captain Graham, lead and drive this motley assemblage. There they handed over to the Commissariat Department the loads they had brought up, and then set to work with their levies at clearing the bush, making roads, and doing general pioneer work. What sort of life he and Graham spent at that time is shown in a characteristic passage of Baden-Powell's diary:—

"At early dawn, while the hush of the thick white mist yet hangs above the forest, a pyjama-clad figure creeps from its camp-bed in the palm-leaf hut, and kicks up a sleeping drummer to sound 'Reveillé.' Then the tall, dark forest wall around the clearing echoes with the boom of the elephant-tusk horns, whose sound is all the more weird since it comes from between the human jaws with which the horns are decorated. The war-drums rumble out a kind of Morse rattle that is quite understandable to its hearers. The men get up readily enough, but it is merely in order to light their fires and to settle down to eat plaintains, while the white chiefs take their tubs, quinine, and tea. A further rattling of the drum for parade produces no result. The king is called for. 'Why are your men not on parade?' With a deprecatory smile the king explains that he is suffering from rheumatism in the shoulder, and therefore he, and consequently his tribe, cannot march to-day. He is given a Cockle's pill, and is warned that if he is not ready to march in five minutes, he will be fined a shilling. (The luxury of fining a real, live king to the extent of one shilling!) In five minutes he returns and says that if the white officer will give his men some salt to eat with their 'chop' (food), he thinks they will be willing to march.

"The white officer grimly says he will get a little salt for them,

and proceeds to cut a specimen of a particularly lithe and whippy cane. A hundred pair of eyes are watching him. They read his intention in a moment, and at once there is a stir. A moment later, and *that* portion of the army are off in a long string upon the forward road, with their goods and chattels and chop tied up in bundles on their heads.

"But the whole levy is as yet by no means under way. Here a whole company of another tribe is still squatting, eating plantains, and jabbering away, indifferent to every other sound. 'Call the chief.' Yes, the chief is most willing to do anything; would march straight on to Kumassi if ordered. But his captains are at present engaged in talking over the situation, and he cannot well disturb them. The white chief does not take long about disturbing them, but still the rank and file don't move. The captains have something they would like to communicate to the white chief. 'Well, out with it.'

"The head captain has come to the conclusion, from information received, that the Ashantis are a most cowardly race.

"'Quite right. Just what I have told you all along; and if you will only hurry up, we can get right up to them in a few days and smash them.'

"'Ah! the white chief speaks brave words, but he does not know the ways of the bush warriors. No; the plan which the captains in council have agreed upon is to draw the enemy on by retiring straight away back to Cape Coast Castle. The enemy will follow them, and will run on to the bayonets of the white soldiers who are coming up from the coast.'

"'A very good plan, but not quite identical with that of the white chief. There is only one plan in his mind, and that is to go forward, and this plan must be carried out by all. He has in his hand a repeating rifle which fires fourteen shots. When the regiment begins its retirement, he will go to the head of it and will shoot at each man as he comes by. Fourteen corpses will suffice to block up the path. And now any who like to go back on these conditions can do so; the gun is already loaded.

Portrait of King Prempeh.

Those who like to go forward to get their chop at the next halting-place can move on. Those who like to sit where they are can do so till it is their turn to be tied to a tree, to get a dozen lashes, commencing with this gentleman.' Loads are taken up, and in a moment the whole force goes laughing and singing on the forward path.

"On through the deep, dark aisles, still foggy with the morning mist and wet with the dripping dew. Twisting and turning, now up, now down, clambering over giant tree-roots or splashing through the sucking mud—all in moist and breathless heat, till, tired and dripping, we reach the next site for a camp. Two hours' rest for mid-day chop, and then parade. More delays, more excuses, and at last every man has his tool issued to him, and every company has its work assigned to it. No. 1 to clear the bush. No. 2 to cut stockade posts. No. 3 to cut palm-leaf wattle. No. 4 to dig stockade holes. No. 5 to mount sentries and prevent men hiding in huts; and so on, till every one is at work. We lay out the plan and trace of the fort that is to be built, and of the huts that are to form the camp.

"'Hallo! where are the hole-diggers?'

"'They have retired to have some chop.'

"'Chop? they've only just finished two hours of chop.'

"'Yes—but the white chief works them so hard that they have big appetites.'

"'They—and you, their chief—will all be fined a day's pay.'

"'Yes, well, the white man is powerful. Still, we prefer that to not having our chop. Many thanks.'

"'Oh, but you'll have to work as well. See this little instrument? That's a hunting-crop. Come, I'll show you how it can be used. I'll begin on you, my friend!'

"No need to. They all fly to their work. Then you go round. Every company in turn is found sitting down, or eye-serving.

"'Down with that tree, my lad—you with the felling-axe! Not know how to use it?'

"For three days I felled trees myself, till I found that I could get the tree felled equally well by merely showing the cracker of the hunting-crop. The men had loved to see me work. The crop came to be called 'Volapük,' because it was understood by every tribe. But, though often shown, it was never used.

"The bush-clearing company are sitting down, not a yard of bush cut. 'Why?'

"'Oh, we are fishermen by occupation, and don't know anything about bush-cutting.'

"The bush soon comes down nevertheless, and, what is more wonderful, by sunset there is an open space of some seven or eight acres where this morning there was nothing but a sea of bush jungle. Large palm thatched sheds have sprung up in regular lines, and in the centre stands a nearly finished fort, with its earth rampart bound up by stockade and wattle. Within it are two huts, for hospital and storehouse. Trains of carriers are already arriving with hundreds of boxes of beef and biscuit to be checked, arranged, and stored. At sunset sounds the drum, the treasure box and ledger are opened, and the command comes up for pay.

"'First company—how many men present?'

"'Sixty-eight, sir.'

"'But it has only got fifty-nine on its establishment!'

"'Next company.'

"'All here, sir, but some few men away sick—and two he never come'—and so on and so on. At last it is over, except that a despatch-runner comes in with a telegram, forwarded from the last telegraph station, to ask from Cape Coast Castle offices immediate reason why the men's pay-list has been sent in in manuscript, instead of on Army Form O 1729!"

From Prahsu the expedition, under the command of Sir Francis Scott, went on its way towards Kumassi. Its formation when it came near to that plague-spot of the earth was as follows:—First came Baden-Powell's crowd of red-fezzed natives, keeping a variable distance from the advanced guard, which

consisted of two companies of the Gold Coast Houssas and a Maxim gun. A quarter of a mile after that came the main body, covering a distance of nine miles, and consisting of Special Service Corps, two guns, a Maxim gun, the Headquarters Staff, a half of the Bearer Company, six companies of the 2nd West Yorkshire Regiment, two guns and two rockets, the other half of the Bearer Company, the Ammunition Column, the Baggage Column, the Supply Column, the Field Hospital, and, as rear-guard, two more companies of the 2nd West Yorkshire Regiment and the Lagos Houssas with a Maxim. Flanking the latter portion of the main column on the right, and distributed by half-sections, came one company of the 2nd West India Regiment. It is evident from his diary that Baden-Powell wanted some fighting—at Ordasu an embassy from King Prempeh offered that bloodthirsty savage's complete and unconditional surrender to Captain Stuart, Political Officer accompanying the column, and Baden-Powell remarks, characteristically enough, "Alas! this looks like a peaceful end of all our work," and a few days afterwards, recording the entrance into Kumassi, he dwells rather bitterly on the disappointment which the men felt in having no fighting. But the expedition was destined to be a peaceful one—the British troops and native levies marched into the city of death quietly enough. Baden-Powell and his assistant, Graham, with their scouts, were in first, and with them were the Political Officer and Major Piggott, who bore the Union Jack on a silver-mounted hog-spear. Then came the native levies, then Major Gordon's flank detachment, and finally the main body—and Prempeh and his chiefs sat by and watched. Baden-Powell's account of the scene is full of life and colour:—

"The drumming in the town was getting louder, and the roar of voices filled the air; but, alas! it was peace drumming. The great coloured umbrellas were soon seen dancing and bobbing above the heads of the surging crowds of natives. Stool-bearers ran before, then came the whirling dancers with their yellow skirts flying round them. Great drums, like beer-barrels, decked

King Prempeh watching the arrival of Troops.

with human skulls, were booming out their notes, and bands of elephant-tusk horns were adding to the din. The king and all his chiefs were coming out to see the troops arrive. Presently they arranged themselves in a dense long line. The umbrellas formed a row of booths, beneath which the chiefs sat on their brass-nailed chairs, with all their courtiers round them. This was nine o'clock, and there they sat till five.

"Often had they sat like this before upon that same parade-ground; but never had their sitting been without the sight of blood. The object of this open space was not for parading troops, but for use as the theatre of human sacrifice. Orders had been given before our arrival to clean away all signs of this custom, nor were the people to speak of it to the white men; but with very little cross-examination all the facts came out. Indeed, while standing about the parade-ground, 'The Sutler' peered into the coppice close by, where the trees supported a flock of healthy-looking vultures, and there at once he found skulls and bones of human dead.

"And there sits Prempeh, looking very bored, as three scarlet-clad dwarfs dance before him, amid the dense crowd of sword-bearers, court criers, fly-catchers, and other officials. He looks a regal figure as he sits upon a lofty throne with a huge velvet umbrella standing over him, upon his head a black and gold tiara, and on his neck and arms large golden beads and nuggets."

It was all over with Prempeh. He and his chiefs heard the doom of the nation pronounced, and found themselves prisoners, and within a very short time of the arrival of the British punitive force at Kumassi it was on its way back to Cape Coast Castle with the Ashanti monarch and his queen-mother in custody of the 2nd West Yorkshire Regiment. It is very evident that Baden-Powell was disappointed because there was no fighting —disappointed, perhaps, more on account of the men than on his own. In his journal, under date February 8th, 1896, he pays a magnificent tribute to the British soldier's pluck and endurance:—

"CAPE COAST CASTLE, *February 8th*, 1896.

"The march up to Kumassi was a weary, toilsome business, even in spite of the excitement and hope which buoyed the men up. What, then, can one say of the march down, when the same long depressing road had to be re-traversed by men whose spirits were now lowered by the deep disappointment they had suffered, and whose systems were gradually giving in to the attacks of the ever-present fever fiend? In truth, that march down was in its way as fine an exhibition of British stamina and pluck as any that has been seen of late years. For the casual reader in England this is difficult to realize, but to one who has himself wearily tramped that interminable path, heartsick and footsore, the sight of those dogged British 'Tommies,' heavily accoutred as they were, still defying fever in the sweltering heat, and ever pressing on, was one which opened one's eyes and one's heart as well.

"There was no malingering *there;* each man went on until he dropped. It showed more than any fight could have done, more than any investment in a fort, or surprise in camp, what stern and sterling stuff our men are made of, notwithstanding all that cavillers will say against our modern army system and its soldiers.

"To one fine young fellow—who, though evidently gripped by fever, still was doggedly marching on—I suggested that his kit was very heavy, whereat he replied, with the tight drawn smile and quavering voice one knows too well out here, 'It ain't the kit, sir! it's only these extra rounds that I feel the weight of.' 'These extra rounds' being those intended for the fight which never came. The never-ending sameness of the forest was in itself sufficient to depress the most light and cheerful mind, and thus it was a great relief at length to get to Mansu, where the bush begins to open out, and where there is more of the light and air of heaven. But the change is not altogether for the better. The forest, it is true, is gone, but the road is open to the sun, while the undergrowth on either hand is denser now than ever, and

forms a high, impenetrable hedge that seems to shut out every breath of breeze. Acting on the experiences of the upward march, this portion of the road was now traversed by the troops by night, and consequently heat apoplexy and sunstroke were not encountered. But the string of loaded hammocks grew longer every day!"

With the despatch of Prempeh and his mother into exile the Ashanti Expedition practically came to an end, and Baden-Powell returned to England, having done a vast amount of pioneering work, kept a full journal, seen a king dance, made numerous sketches, and generally added to his store of knowledge of men and things. The powers that be gave him a brevet-lieutenant-colonelcy and a star for his pains, and then sent him off to his regiment in Ireland to resume his usual avocations of hard work and hard play.

Embarkation of King Prempeh.

## II.

### THE MATABELE CAMPAIGN, 1896

On the afternoon of Friday, April 24th, 1896, Baden-Powell was in Belfast, attending the funeral of one of the men of his squadron who had been killed by a fall from his horse. During the ceremony a telegram from General Sir Frederick Carrington was put into his hands, warning him that he might be summoned to take part in the operations against the rebellious Matabele. Close upon this came the official notification from Sir Evelyn Wood, Quartermaster-General, directing him to proceed to Southampton and to embark on the s.s. *Tantallon Castle* on May 2nd. By May 6th he was at Madeira, well on his way to the beginning of the most important military affair he had yet engaged in. At 4 a.m. on May 19th he woke to find the screw stopped, the ship motionless, and to see "looming dark against the stars, the long, flat top of grand old Table Mountain." He was once more in South Africa—little dreaming, perhaps, of what lay before him in the immediate future, or of what he was to do there ere another five years had gone by.

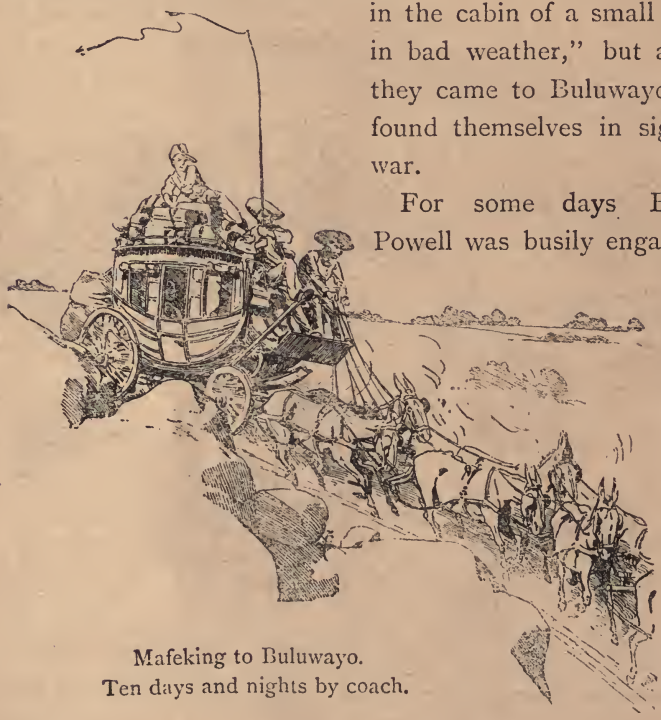
He found Cape Town "just the same as ever." A brief stay there, a hearty God-speed from a crowd of well-remembered faces at the station, and he was off for Mafeking. One wonders if he knew, if he had any premonitions that almost exactly three years later he would be bound for Mafeking again, charged to fight a much superior enemy to the savage Matabele. He says nothing of that—all he records in his journal of the first night in the train is that the beds were hard and the night cold. He reached Mafeking on May 22nd. It then consisted of a

little corrugated tin house and goods shed, serving as railway station, hundreds of waggons and mounds of stores, and a street and market square also composed of tin houses. He found

Sir Frederick Carrington—to whom he was to act as Chief Staff Officer—here, and with the other officers of his Staff took up his quarters in a railway carriage. This, however, was to be but a short stay in Mafeking; on May 23rd, he, General

Carrington, Captain Vyvyan, and Lieutenant Ferguson set off for Buluwayo by coach—"a regular Buffalo-Bill-Wild-West-Deadwood affair, hung by huge leather springs on a heavy, strongly-built under-carriage, drawn by ten mules." They were ten days and nights in this vehicle, which laboured along at a slow rate through the heavy sand, and rocked and pitched until Baden-Powell described its motion as "exactly like being in the cabin of a small yacht in bad weather," but at last they came to Buluwayo, and found themselves in sight of war.

For some days Baden-Powell was busily engaged in



Mafeking to Buluwayo.
Ten days and nights by coach.

office-work. Buluwayo had been cleared of the rebellious Matabele, but the impis were still hanging about in the neighbourhood, and in order to clear them away Sir F. Carrington decided to despatch three strong columns simultaneously to the north, north-east, and north-west, for distances of sixty to eighty miles. On June 5th Colonel Plumer with 460 men went off to the north-west; Macfarlane's column, 400 strong, set out for the north. A third column, under Spreckley, was to set forth next day, but at ten

o'clock in the evening, as Baden-Powell was finishing his office-work, the American scout Burnham rode in to announce the near presence of a large impi of the Matabele. Baden-Powell went out to reconnoitre, and ere morning had sent a request to Buluwayo for troops from Spreckley's column. With a force of 250 men and two guns he moved upon the waiting Matabele, who were about 1200 strong. He thus describes the fight in his journal:—

"They did not seem very excited at our advance, but all stood looking as we crossed the Umgusa stream, but as we began to breast the slope on their side of it, and on which their camp lay,

The Umgusa Fight: June 6th.

they became exceedingly lively, and were soon running like ants to take post in good positions at the edge of a long belt of thicker bush. We afterwards found that their apathy at first was due to a message from the M'limo, who had instructed them to approach and to draw out the garrison, and to get us to cross the Umgusa, because he (the M'limo) would then cause the stream to open and swallow up every man of us. After which the impi would have nothing to do but walk into Buluwayo and cut up the women and children at their leisure. But something had gone wrong with the M'limo's machinery, and we crossed the stream without any contretemps. So, as we got nearer to the swarm of black heads

among the grass and bushes, their rifles began to pop and their bullets to flit past with a weird little 'phit,' 'phit,' or a jet of dust and a shrill 'wh-e-e-e-w' where they ricocheted off the ground. Some of our men, accustomed to mounted infantry work, were now for jumping off to return the fire, but the order was given: 'No; make a cavalry fight of it. Forward! Gallop!'

"Then, as we came up close, the niggers let us have an irregular, rackety volley, and in another moment we were among them. They did not wait, but one and all they turned to fly, dodging in among the bushes, loading as they ran. And we were close upon their heels, zigzagging through the thorns, jumping off now and then, or pulling up, to fire a shot (we had not a sword among us, worse luck!), and on again.

"The men that I was with—Grey's Scouts—never seemed to miss a shot.

"The Matabele as they ran kept stopping behind bushes to fire. Now and again they tried to rally, but whenever a clump of them began to form or tried to stand, we went at them with a whoop and a yell, and both spurs in, and sent them flying. Of course, besides their guns they had their assegais. Several of our horses got some wounds, and one man got a horrid stab straight into his stomach. I saw another of our men fling himself on to a Kafir who was stabbing at him; together they rolled on the ground, and in a twinkling the white man had twisted the spear from its owner's hand, and after a short, sharp tussle, he drove it through the other's heart.

"In one place one of the men got somewhat detached from the rest, and came on a bunch of eight of the enemy. These fired on him and killed his horse, but he himself was up in trice, and, using magazine fire, he let them have it with such effect that before they could close on him with their clubs and assegais, he had floored half their number, and the rest just turned and fled. And farther on a horse was shot, and, in the fall, his rider stunned. The niggers came looping up, grinning at the anticipated bloodshed, but Sergeant Farley, of Grey's Scouts, was there before

them, and, hoisting up his comrade on to his horse, got him safe away.

"Everywhere one found the Kafirs creeping into bushes, where they lay low till some of us came by, and then they loosed off their guns at us after we had passed.

"I had my Colt's repeater with me—with only six cartridges in the magazine, and soon I found I had finished these—so, throwing it under a peculiar tree, where I might find it again, I went on with my revolver. Presently I came on an open stretch of ground, and about eighty yards before me was a Kafir with a Martini-Henry. He saw me and dropped on one knee and drew a steady bead on me. I felt so indignant at this that I rode at him as hard as I could go, calling him every name under the sun; he aimed,—for an hour, it seemed to me,—and it was quite a relief when at last he fired, at about ten yards distance, and still more of a relief when I realized he had clean missed me. Then he jumped up and turned to run, but he had not gone two paces when he cringed as if some one had slapped him hard on the back, then his head dropped and his heels flew up, and he fell smack on his face, shot by one of our men behind me.

"At last I called a halt. Our horses were done, the niggers were all scattered, and there were almost as many left behind us hiding in bushes as there were running on in front.

"A few minutes spent in breathing the horses, and a vast amount of jabber and chaff, and then we re-formed the line and returned at a walk, clearing the bush as we went.

"I had one shave. I went to help two men who were fighting a Kafir at the foot of a tree, but they killed him just as I got there. I was under the tree when something moving over my head caught my attention. It was a gun-barrel taking aim down at me, the firer jammed so close to the tree-stem as to look like part of it. Before I could move he fired, and just ploughed into the ground at my feet. He did not remain much longer in the tree. I have his knobkerrie and his photo now as mementoes.

"At length we mustered again at our starting-point, where the

guns and ambulance had been left. We found that, apart from small scratches and contusions, we had only four men badly wounded. One poor fellow had his thigh smashed by a ball from an elephant gun, from which he afterwards died. Another had two bullets in his back. Four horses had been killed.

"And the blow dealt to the enemy was a most important one. A prisoner told us that the impi was composed of picked men from all the chief regiments of the rebel forces, and that a great number of the chiefs were present at the fight."

Baden-Powell contrived to vary the monotony of office-work by a little scouting. He made friends with Burnham and arranged to go scouting with him, and was much disappointed that the agreement could not be carried out. In his journal, under date June 26th, he mentions that having been closely confined to the office for four days, he set out after dinner for a ten-mile ride, roused up some other congenial spirits, and spent the night out-o'-doors, feeling all the better for the change. However, as the days sped on, opportunities for indulging in scouting came, and Baden-Powell—to whom at this time the Matabele gave the nickname of Impeesa—the Wolf that never Sleeps—made a great many useful observations of the Matopos country. Then came his release from town and office life. As he knew the country intimately, he was sent to act as guide to Colonel Plumer, whose force was about to engage in a campaign in the Matopos, and on the evening of July 19th he went off alone in front of the column (preferring that "for fear of having my attention distracted

Eight to One.

if any one were with me, and of thereby losing my bearings") across the moonlit country. They advanced close to the enemy and then lay down to sleep—"jolly cold" it was, he says in his journal—rising at dawn to enter a hollow, bushy valley where he "jumped for joy" at finding some traces of the enemy's presence. The following extract from Baden-Powell's journal affords a graphic picture of what followed:—

"My telescope soon showed that there was a large camp with numerous fires, and crowds of natives moving among them. These presently formed into one dense brown mass, with their assegai blades glinting sharply in the rays of the morning sun. We soon got the guns up to the front from the main body, and in a few minutes they were banging their shells with beautiful accuracy over the startled rebel camp.

"While they were at this game, I stole onwards with a few native scouts into the bottom of the valley, and soon saw another thin wisp of smoke not far from me in the bush; we crept cautiously down, and there found a small outpost of the enemy just leaving the spot where they had been camped for the night. At this point two valleys ran off from the main valley in which we were; one, running to the south, was merely a long narrow gorge, along which flowed the Tuli River; the other, on the opposite side of the river from us, ran to the eastward and formed a small open plateau surrounded by a circle of intricate koppies. While we were yet watching at this point, strings of natives suddenly appeared streaming across this open valley, retiring from the camp on the mountain above, which was being shelled by our guns. They were going very leisurely, and, thinking themselves unobserved, proceeded to take up their position among the encircling koppies. I sent back word of their movements, and calling together the Native Levy, proceeded at once to attack them. To do this more effectually, we worked round to the end of the main valley and got into some vast rock strongholds on the edge of the Tuli gorge. These, though recently occupied by hundreds of men, were now vacated, and one had an opportunity

of seeing what a rebel stronghold was like from the inside; all the paths were blocked and barricaded with rocks and small trees; the whole place was honeycombed with caves to which all entrances, save one or two, were blocked with stones; among these loopholes were left, such as to enable the occupants to fire in almost any direction. Looking from these loopholes to the opposite side of the gorge, we could see the enemy close on us in large numbers, taking up their position in a similar stronghold. Now and again two or three of them would come out of a cave on to a flat rock and dance a war-dance at our troops, which they could see in the distance, being quite unsuspicious of our near presence. They were evidently rehearsing what they would do when they caught the white man among their rocks, and they were shouting all sorts of insults to the troops, more with a spirit of bravado than with any idea of their reaching their ears at that distance. Interesting as the performance was, we did not sit it out for long, but put an abrupt end to it by suddenly loosing a volley at them at short range and from this unexpected quarter.

"Then, clambering down among the rocks, we crossed the Tuli River and commenced the ascent of the towering crags in which the enemy were located. Of course this had to be done on foot, and I left my horse tied to a tree, with my coat and all spare kit hung in the branches.

"Our friendlies went very gaily at the work at first, with any amount of firing, but very little result; the enemy had now entirely disappeared into their caves and holes among the rocks, merely looking out to fire and then popping in again. Our own niggers climbed about, firing among the rocks, but presently did more firing than climbing, and began to take cover and to stick to it; finally, two of them were bowled over, and the rest of them got behind the rocks and there remained, and no efforts could get them to budge. I then called up the Cape Boys and the Maxims (in which Lord Grey assisted where it was difficult to move owing to the very bad ground); these reinforcements came up with no loss of time and went to work with a will. It was delightful to watch

the cool, business-like way in which Robertson brought his Boys along. They floundered through the boggy stream and crawled up the smooth, dome-shaped rocks beyond, and soon were clambering up among the koppies, banging and cheering. Llewellyn, too, brought his guns along at equal speed, and soon had them in equal position on apparently inaccessible crags, where they came into action with full effect at every chance the enemy gave them.

"The fight gradually moved along the eastern valley, in the centre of which was a convenient rock from which I was able to see all that was going on, and it formed a good centre for directing the attacks, as the enemy were in the rocks on every side of us. The Cape Boys, after making a long circle round through part of the stronghold, reassembled at this spot, and from it directed their further attacks on the different parts requiring them, and it became the most convenient position for the machine guns, as they were able to play in every direction in turn from this point. For the systematic attack on the stronghold a portion of it is assigned to each company, and it is a pleasing sight to see the calm and ready way in which they set to work. They crowd into the narrow, bushy paths between the koppies, and then swarm out over the rocks from whence the firing comes, and very soon the row begins. A scattered shot here and there, and then a rattling volley; the boom of the elephant gun roaring dully from inside a cave is answered by the sharp crack of a Martini-Henry; the firing gradually wakes up on every side of us, the weird whisk of a bullet overhead is varied by the hum of a leaden-coated stone

Scout Burnham.

or the shriek of a pot-leg fired from a Matabele big-bore gun; and when these noises threaten to become monotonous, they are suddenly enlivened up by the hurried energetic "tap, tap, tap" of the Maxims or the deafening "pong" of the Hotchkiss. As you approach the koppies, excitement seems to be in the air; they stand so still and harmless-looking, and yet you know that from several at least of those holes and crannies the enemy are watching you, with finger on trigger, waiting for a fair chance. But it is from the least expected quarter that a roar comes forth and a cloud of smoke, and the dust flies up at your feet."

The campaign in the Matopos continued until nearly the middle of August, and Baden-Powell was actively engaged during the whole of it, chiefly in reconnaissance and scouting. Once, at any rate, he met with an amusing adventure in giving chase to a young Matabele lady, who proved herself quite equal to him in agility and cunning.

" . . . I still wanted to catch a prisoner—though I did not at first see my way to doing it. However, in the course of our prowl we presently came on fresh well-beaten tracks, evidently of women and children going to and from the outlying country, probably bringing in supplies. This seemed to offer us a chance of catching some of them coming in, although, as the sun was up, we had little hope of being very successful.

" But luck was with us again, and we had hardly settled ourselves near the path when I saw a couple of women coming along with loads on their heads. The moment they saw us, they dropped their loads and ran, but Richardson and I galloped for them, and one, an elderly lady, gave herself up without any fuss; but the other, a lithe and active young person, dived away at a tremendous pace into the long grass, and completely disappeared from view. We searched about, and kept a bright look-out for her, but in vain.

" Then Richardson questioned the old lady, who proved to be very communicative; she was apparently superintending the supply department of Umlugulu's impi, and was now returning

from a four days' visit of inspection to the supply base in some of his villages in the district. She was a lady of rank too, being a niece of Umzilikatze, and we should not have caught her, so she said, had her escort not been a pack of lazy dogs. She had four Matabele warriors with her, but they had dropped behind on the path, and should not now be far off. This was good news to

The Peace Indaba with the Matopo Rebels.

Mr. Cecil Rhodes carried out the peace negotiations with the Matabele chiefs. He was assisted by Dr. Sauer (on his left) and Capt. Colenbrander (on his right), and accompanied by Mr. Stent (war correspondent of the *Cape Times*).

us, and, calling up our Boys, we laid an ambush ready to catch the escort.

"While this was being done, I happened to catch sight of our young lady stealing away in the distance. She was getting away at a great pace, her body bent double to the ground, taking advantage of every bit of cover, more like an animal than a human being. Away I went after her as hard as I could go, and I had a grand gallop. When she found that concealment was no longer any use, she straightened herself and just started off like a deer, and at a pace equal to my own; it was a grand race

through long grass and bush, the ground gradually getting more rough and broken as it approached the hills, and this told in her favour, for as her pace slackened for want of breath, my horse also was going slower owing to the bad ground. So she ran me right up to the stronghold, and just got away into the rocks ahead of me. I had, of course, then to haul off, as to go farther was to walk into the hands of the impi. The bad part of it was, that she had now got in there, and would spread the news of our being about, and they would probably come out and upset our little plan of catching the party on the road."

But sometimes there were incidents which had nothing but the darker colours of life in them. In the fight of August 5th, two of the little band of officers under Colonel Plumer were killed, and Baden-Powell thus comments upon their loss in his journal, under date August 6th:—

"It is a sad shock to sit in one's little mess of half a dozen comrades once more, and to find two of them are missing from the meal. Poor Kershaw and Hervey! Now and then one is on the point of calling to the usual sleeping-place of one or other of them to bid him come and eat, when suddenly the grim, cold recollection strikes you—'He is yonder—dead.'

"Poor Hervey took his mortal wound as though it were but a cut finger, yet knowing that he was fast passing away. Now and then he sent for those he knew to come and see him and to say good-bye. He was perfectly possessed and cheery to the last, and happily without much pain.

"Poor chap, this was his first fight. He had been the paymaster to the forces, and had asked me to get him some appointment in the field. When he joined us in camp, I could not for the moment find a billet for him, till it occurred to me that there was a small company of men who had come up from Kimberley without an officer. They were so deficient in belts and bayonet scabbards that they always went with bayonets 'fixed,' and had thus gained for themselves the nickname of 'The Forlorn Hope.'

"On suggesting 'The Forlorn Hope' to Hervey, he was

delighted, and it was at their head he so gallantly met his death.

"His death is to me like the snatching away of a pleasing book half read.

"And Kershaw was the very type of a cool, brave, energetic officer. His loss to our little force is irreparable."

The Battle of August 5th.

The sketch above will explain the nature of the operation which led to Colonel Plumer's victory on August 5th.

On the night of August 10th, Baden-Powell rode thirty miles into Buluwayo to report to General Carrington that the enemy in the Matopos were completely broken up and probably willing to surrender. From thence onward to September 6th he was on the sick-list—fever and dysentery—but he was pulled up on the 7th by "a better tonic than any which the combined medical faculty of Buluwayo could devise," in the shape of orders from the General to take charge of a column then under Ridley in the Somabula Forest.

Next day he took three of Plumer's men as escort, and set off, in his shirt-sleeves as usual, for a hundred miles ride through a wild country. They had various small adventures on the way —amongst them being a meeting with a nigger who told Baden-Powell a beautifully conceived and executed lie about a great battle which had *not* taken place. There are some interesting and significant entries in his journal about this time. Here is one as to the making of bread under difficulties:—

"I lay up during the heat of the day with a waterproof sheet spread over a thorn-bush as a shelter from the sun. The men dug water in the sand, washed, and baked bread. To bake bread, lay your coat on the ground, inside upwards, mix the flour and water in it (it doesn't show when you put the coat on again); for yeast or baking powder use the juice of the toddy palm or Eno's Fruit Salt to make a light dough; scrape a circle in the ashes of the fire, flop your lump of dough, spread fine sand all round and all over it, then heap the embers of the fire on to it; in half an hour an excellent flat loaf of bread results. It requires scrubbing with a horse-brush before you eat it."

Under date 11th occurs a passage often quoted by those who have written about Baden-Powell—a passage which, I think, is more indicative of the true character of the man than anything he has done, said, or written.

"*September 11th.*—My anniversary of joining Her Majesty's Service, 1876-1896—twenty years. I always think more of this anniversary than of that of my birth, and I could not picture a more enjoyable way of spending it. I am here, out in the wilds, with three troopers. They are all Afrikanders, that is, Colonial born, one an ex-policeman, another a mining engineer (went to England with me in 1889 on board the *Mexican*), the third an electrical engineer from Johannesburg,—all of them good men on the veldt, and good fighting men. We are nearly eighty miles from Buluwayo and thirty from the nearest troops. I have rigged up a shelter from the sun with my blanket, a rock, and a thorn-bush; thirteen thousand flies are unfortunately staying with me,

and are awfully attentive. One of us is always on the look-out by night and by day. Our stock of food, crockery, cooking utensils, and bedding does not amount to anything much, as we carry it all on our saddles.

"Once, not very long ago, at an afternoon 'At Home,' I was handing a cup of tea to an old dowager, who bridled up in a mantle with bugles and beads, and some one noticed that in doing so my face wore an absent look, and I was afterwards asked where my thoughts were at that time. I could only reply that 'My mind was a blank, with a single vision in it, lower half yellow, upper half blue,' in other words, the yellow veldt of South Africa, topped with the blue South African sky. Possibly the scent of the tea had touched some memory chord which connected it with my black tin billy, steaming among the embers of a wood fire; but whatever it was then, my vision is to-day a reality. I am looking out on the yellow veldt and the blue sky; the veldt with its grey, hazy clumps of thorn-bush is shimmering in the heat, and its vast expanse is only broken by the gleaming white sand of the river-bed and the green reeds and bushes which fringe its banks. (Interruption: Stand to the tent! a 'Devil,' with its roaring pillar of dust and leaves, comes tearing by.) I used to think that the novelty of the thing would wear off, that these visions of the veldt would fade away as civilized life grew upon me. But they didn't. They came again at most inopportune moments: just when I ought to be talking *The World*, or *Truth*, or *Modern Society* (with the cover removed), and making my reputation as a 'sensible, well-informed man, my dear,' with the lady in the mantle, somebody in the next room

A Human Salt-Cellar.

has mentioned the word saddle, or rifle, or billy, or some other attribute of camp life, and off goes my mind at a tangent to play with its toys. Old Oliver Wendell Holmes is only too true when he says that most of us are 'boys all our lives'; we have our toys, and will play with them with as much zest at eighty as at eight, that in their company we can never grow old. I can't help it if my toys take the form of all that has to do with veldt life, and if they remain my toys till I drop—

> "'Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its grey,
> The stars of its winter, the dews of its May;
> And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
> Dear Father, take care of Thy children, the boys.'

May it not be that our toys are the various media adapted to individual tastes through which men may know their God? As Ramakrishna Paramahansa writes: 'Many are the names of God and infinite the forms that lead us to know of Him. In whatsoever name or form you desire to know Him, in that very name and form you will know Him.'"

Arrived in camp on September 12th, Baden-Powell, on taking over the command from Ridley, found himself confronted by a problem which he rapidly solved in a fashion that afterwards led him into a certain amount of trouble. The leading chief of that part of the country, Uwini, had been captured, and was a prisoner in hospital, and the question was what to do with him. He was one of the four great chiefs of the Matabele, was supposed to be sacred, infallible, and invulnerable, and had been one of the principal instigators of the rebellion. Baden-Powell knew that an exemplary punishment inflicted upon him would act as a deterrent upon the rebels, who were rapidly massing in great force close by, and he accordingly ordered Uwini's immediate trial by Field General Court-martial. How the thing was done Baden-Powell records in characteristically brief fashion in his journal:—

"*September 13th.*—The court-martial assembled on Uwini this morning, and tried him on charges of armed rebellion, for ordering his people to murder whites, and for instigating rebellion in this

part of the country. The court-martial gave him a long hearing, in which he practically confessed to what was charged against him, and they found him guilty, and sentenced him to be shot. I was sorry for him—he was a fine old savage; but I signed his warrant, directing that he should be shot at sundown.

. . . . . .

"At sunset all the natives in camp, both friendlies, refugees and prisoners, were paraded to witness the execution of Uwini. He was taken out to an open place in the centre of his stronghold, where all his people who were still holding out could see what was being done, and he was there shot by a firing party from the troops."

Fresh Horse-Beef.

Later on there was some red-tape business over this episode, and some talk of court-martialling Baden-Powell, but it came to nothing—he had done the only thing that could be done.

The Shangani column, under Baden-Powell's command, made a complete examination of the thickly-wooded country about the Gwelo without finding much trace of the enemy. By September 20th their rations began to run out, and on that day Baden-Powell was obliged to order one of the horses to be shot, cut up, and served out to the men—a foretaste of what was to happen in Mafeking a few years later. He gives the *menu* of his mid-day meal that day:—

". . . Weak tea (can't afford it strong), no sugar (we are out of it), a little bread (we have half a pound a day), Irish stew (consisting of slab of horse boiled in muddy water with a pinch of rice and half a pinch of pea-flour), salt, none. For a plate

I use one of my gaiters; it is marked 'Tautz & Sons, No. 3031'; it is a far cry from veldt and horseflesh to Tautz and Oxford Street."

They were now to meet with a new and dreadful enemy in the shape of Thirst. They travelled for a long distance without finding any signs of water; then Baden-Powell and Gielgud, an old American scout, set out on ponies in the endeavour to find river, or pool, or spring. After travelling nine miles without success, they decided to turn back and retreat with the patrol upon the Gwelo River, but when dawn broke on September 21st they found to their horror that the patrol had followed them, and was close at hand. Then Gielgud and Baden-Powell set out again, casting about in the dry, baked valleys and sun-burnt vleys for hours without success, until at last, when the American scout was asleep on his horse for very weariness, Baden-Powell noticed that a buck had been scratching in the sand, and that two pigeons flew away from behind a rock. There was water of a sort there, priceless to thirsty men, and there the patrol was quickly brought. That night, luckily, they came to the Shangani, and it being a "great occasion," Baden-Powell supped off his last spoonful of cocoa, a nugget of rock-like bread, and a fid of horse, and went to bed without his boots. What luxuriousness!

From the Shangani River Baden-Powell moved on to Ingati, and thence into Balingwe district, having with him a column consisting of half a squadron of the 7th Hussars and the York and Lancaster Mounted Infantry, and a seven-pounder and a machine gun manned by police—a handful of 160 men altogether, with an ambulance and wagons carrying three weeks' supplies. He advanced across country to the stronghold in which Wedza, one of the rebel chiefs, had entrenched himself, and demanded that gentleman's surrender. What sort of strong place it was in which Wedza had gathered his forces may be guessed at from Baden-Powell's description of it:—

"The stronghold itself is a long mountain, consisting of six peaks of about 800 feet high, its total length being about two and

a half miles, and its width about a mile and a half. On the extreme top of five of the peaks are perched strong kraals, and in addition to these there are three small kraals on the side of the mountain; underneath each of the kraals are labyrinths of caves. The mountain itself has steep, boulder-strewn, bush-grown sides, generally inaccessible, except where the narrow, difficult paths lead up to the various strongholds, and these paths have been fortified by the rebels with stockades and with stone breastworks, and in many places they pass between huge rocks, where only one man could squeeze through at a time. The paths are commanded by loopholes for musketry from the caves. The kraals are collections of circular mud huts with thatched roofs, built on crags near the tops of the hills, and on the most inaccessible rocks among them are perched the corn-bins; these grain stores are little circular pillars exactly like pillar letter-boxes at home, but made of wattle and daub, with a small thatched roof; a little hole is left near the top of the bin, just as a hole for letters in the letter-box, and through this hole the corn is poured into the bin. When full, the hole is sealed up with a flat stone and mortar. When one loots a kraal, the first thing to do is to knock out this stone, look in, and if there is corn there of the kind that you require, make a hole in the bottom of the wall and apply the mouth of your sack to it, and the corn will run in."

He had already expressed his conviction that it would take every man of Paget's column and of his own combined to reduce this stronghold, but on October 14th Paget sent runners to say that he could not join him, so Baden-Powell determined to tackle Wedza with such forces as he had at his own disposal. It was something of a daring feat. Wedza's mountain was tenanted by about 1600 people, of whom 600 or 700 were fighting men entrenched in an almost impregnable position; Baden-Powell had 120 men all told. He felt sure that a direct attack would result in nothing but loss, and therefore decided that the only thing possible was to try and bluff the enemy out of his position His idea was as follows:—

"Wedza's mountain is a kind of promontory standing out from a range of smaller mountains, so I ordered the mounted infantry (York and Lancaster Regiment), under Lieutenant Thurnall, to leave their horses in the open valley at the foot of the mountain, and to gain the neck which joined the mountain to the range of mountains northward. From this position the mounted infantry would command a large part of the stronghold with their fire, and would cut off the enemy's line of retreat to the mountains. This party was ordered to take up with them their great-coats, water, and two days' rations, for they would have to stay there the whole day and night, and possibly part of the following day; there were only about twenty-five of them, but they were ordered to act as if there were 250, and right well they played their part. My idea was, that, so soon as this party should have established themselves in their position on the neck, I would bombard the central part of the position systematically with artillery and machine-gun fire, and, at the same time, threaten the left (southern) flank, and the rear of the position with parties of 7th Hussars.

"I intended to keep up this demonstration during the day and to-night, hoping that such action, combined with the moral effect already afforded by the object lesson at Matzetetza's yesterday, would so work on the feelings of the defenders, that they would take my previous advice and surrender; or if they did not do that, that, at least, they would be so demoralized that an assault could be carried out with some chance of success on the morrow. For these natives will stand your coming at their position so long as you do so from the expected direction, but if you come at them some other way, or look as if you were likely to cut off their line of retreat, they are very liable to become frightened, and therefore, in dealing with them, it sometimes becomes necessary to disregard the teachings of books on tactics, and, instead of concentrating your force, to spread it about in a way that would invite disaster were you acting against civilized troops. In order to gain our positions to carry out this plan, I took the mounted

infantry by one route, and sent the Hussars and guns by another more southerly path—under Major Ridley—to take up their places as ordered."

During the course of the engagement which followed Baden-Powell had a very narrow escape from death. He had worked round into a labyrinth of small valleys at the back of Wedza's mountain, and, leaving his horse concealed there, had clambered up on to the ridge in order to reconnoitre the stronghold from the rear. After he and his companions had been there until sundown they turned to make their way back, and here came the narrow shave:—

"Owing to the broken nature of the country at this point, we were forced to carry out what I always consider a most dangerous practice, and that is, to return by the same path which you used in coming, and the danger of it was practically demonstrated on this occasion. Riding quietly along in the dusk, we had just got out of the bad part, thinking all danger was over, when there was suddenly a flash and a crash of musketry from a ridge of rocks close to us, dust spurted up all around, and a swish of bullets whizzed past our heads. My hat was violently struck from my head as if with a stick, and in an instant we were galloping across the thirty yards of open which separated us from a similar parallel ridge; dismounting here, we were very soon busy replying to the firing of the enemy, whose forms we could now and again see silhouetted against the evening sky. We had had a marvellous escape; Jackson himself had been grazed on the shoulder, his horse had a bullet-hole in its temple, the bullet had lodged in its head, and, beyond possibly a slight headache, the gallant little horse appeared to be none the worse. Our position here was not too good a one: the enemy were evidently a fairly strong party, and would merely have to work among the rocks, a little to the right, to cut us off from rejoining our main body. Moreover, they had practically possession, or, at least, command of fire over my hat, which I badly wanted. But it looked as though we ought at once to be making good our retreat, if we

meant to go away at all. We were just mounting to carry this out, when out of the gathering darkness behind, there trotted up a strong party of hussars, under Prince Teck, who, hearing the firing, had at once hurried to the spot; his coming was most opportune, and reversed the aspect of affairs. After a few minutes of sharp firing, the rocks in front of us were cleared and occupied by our men, and my hat came back to me."

This escape, however, was not so wonderful or so thrilling as that of one of the Cape Boys, who gravely informed Baden-Powell that a bullet had passed between the top of his ear and his head. It was an escape, though, and a lucky one, for it enabled Baden-Powell to see his well-laid plans crowned with success. Arrived at camp on the night of October 22nd, he received news of Wedza's willingness to submit, and orders to combine with Paget.

From October 25th to November 15th he was occupied in clearing the Mashona frontier. Those folk who stay at home and never see a soldier in anything but the spick-and-span-ishness of the parade-ground or the park may be interested in Baden-Powell's description of himself and his life at this time:—

"We are a wonderfully dirty and ragged-looking crew now—especially me, because I left Buluwayo six weeks ago to join this column only with such things as I could carry on a led pony (including bedding and food). My breeches and shirts are in tatters, my socks have nearly disappeared in shreds. Umtini, my Matabele boy, has made sandals for me to wear over—or at least outside—my soleless shoes. And everywhere the veldt has been burnt by grass fires—every breeze carries about the fine black dust, and five minutes after washing, your hands and arms and face are as grimy and black as ever—as if you were in London again. Bathing 'the altogether' too often is apt to result in fever. Too much washing of hands is apt to help veldt sores to originate—so we don't trouble to keep clean.

"Veldt sores bother nearly every one of us. Every scratch you get (and you get a good number from thorns, &c.) at once becomes

a small sore, gradually grows, and lasts sometimes for weeks. It is partly the effect of hot sun and dry air too rapidly drying up the wound, and also probably the blood is not in too good a state from living on unchanging diet of tinned half-salt beef and tinned vegetables. We have very little variety, except when we loot some sheep or kill a buck. No vegetables, and we are out of sugar, tea, cocoa, and rice. Matches are at a premium, pipes are manufactured out of mealie corncobs and small reeds. Tobacco is very scarce—tea-leaves were in use till tea came to an end."

Dolce far Niente.

General Sir F. Carrington and Mr. Cecil Rhodes on the homeward journey.

However, the end was drawing near. "Wedza's may be said to have been the final blow," he remarks in his journal. On October 29th his patrol was over, and the mounted infantry went off for their march down country, prior to embarkation for India, and Baden-Powell himself went to Gwelo, to give a little explanation as to his summary dealings with Uwini. He was in a little brush with the stragglers of the rebel Matabele at Magnuze Poort; then met Sir Frederick Carrington and went on with him to Salisbury, where he rejoined civilization, dined out, made calls,

rode a bicycle, and went fox-hunting. He also joined in the pleasures of paying a hotel bill which appears to have been one of the most interesting documents ever heard of. It amounted to £258, and covered the expenses of five persons for twelve days, exclusive of liquid refreshment, the cost of which may be gathered from the fact that a whisky and soda meant the expenditure of three shillings! Thence onward to Umtali, and in company with Cecil Rhodes and other great folk to Port Elizabeth, the Liverpool of South Africa, and to Cape Town once more. And then the swift, steady home-going on the *Dunvegan Castle*, with the sense of duty done for empire and right, and at last, on January 27th, 1897, Baden-Powell found himself at home once more, and thought, no doubt, of the wild life of the previous ten months, with a strong hope that something like it would quickly come again.

## Part III.

# THE STORY OF THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING

*October*, 1899—*May*, 1900

## I.

### THE WARM CORNER

In July, 1899, Baden-Powell was suddenly called away from the gaieties of Henley Regatta to attend at the War Office. There he received orders to proceed to South Africa, and within three days he was on his way. Always prepared for such emergencies, he might easily have set out within three hours, but the necessary delay enabled him to pay some farewell visits to friends. It was at this time that he paid the visit to Dr. Haig-Brown, which has become famous because of the words he used in saying good-bye to his old schoolmaster—"I hope they'll give me a warm corner." How warm that corner was to be nobody anticipated when Baden-Powell left England to fill it.

On his arrival at the Cape Baden-Powell was ordered to form a body of irregular troops in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and he set up his headquarters at Mafeking. This place, now famous all the world over, is situate on the Malopo River, and in the most important centre of population in British Bechuanaland. It is a comparatively new settlement, but was of considerable importance as a trading centre ten years ago. Mr. Lionel Decle, the famous traveller, who visited it in 1891, thus describes it in his "Three Years in Savage Africa":—"The 'town' consisted of a big open place called the 'Market Square,' round which were grouped a few buildings, mostly of corrugated iron. Two hotels, five or six stores, a barber, a butcher, and a baker composed the commercial

part of the place. One building, standing by itself, contained the Law Court, the Post, and the Government offices. Add to this a church and a few private houses, where the clergyman, the magistrate, and the doctor lived, and you have Mafeking as it was in 1891. About three-quarters of a mile off is a big native village." By 1899, however, Mafeking had considerably increased in size and importance, though its architecture was still of a very primitive nature, consisting chiefly of soft bricks and corrugated iron. With the exception of the convent, all the houses were but one storey in height. On the west, north, and east the surroundings of Mafeking are flat; on the south and south-east the town is overlooked by high ground.

In Mafeking, between August and October, 1899, Baden-Powell gathered together a small garrison—so small, indeed, that one feels amazed to know that such a handful of men afterwards accomplished so much. At the beginning of October he had under him about seven hundred men, drawn from the Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment, the British South African Police, the Cape Police, the Bechuanaland Rifles, and the Town Guard. The men of the Protectorate Regiment and the South African Police were armed with the Lee-Metford rifle, and had six muzzle-loading seven-pounders, very old-fashioned in make, and several Maxim, Hotchkiss, and Nordenfeldt guns. The remainder of the garrison were armed with the Martini-Henry rifle. Long before war actually broke out, Baden-Powell kept his handful of men busily engaged in strengthening the defences of the town. There were people in Mafeking who would have dissuaded him from making such elaborate preparations, believing that the differences between Great Britain and the South African Republic would be settled by diplomatic process, but Baden-Powell left nothing to chance, and he and his men worked with a will. Defence works were made all round the town, bomb-proof shelters were contrived, a system of communication by telephone between headquarters and the various forts was established, an armoured train (soon to figure very conspicuously in the first outbreak of

hostilities) was kept waiting in the station, and the principal buildings of the town were protected by sand-bags. While all these preparations for a possible siege were being made there were many other things to be done. It was well known that there were several traitors and disaffected folk in Mafeking—Baden-Powell, with characteristic promptitude, had them arrested and placed in safe-keeping. Then came the question of getting the women and children away. A great many of them were sent off to the south, but many refused to leave the town. The sisters at the convent remained as a matter of course, and were soon busily engaged in nursing the sick and wounded. The question of provisioning the place was one which caused Baden-Powell a good deal of anxiety. It was found that the quantities of food-stuffs stocked in the various shops and stores were much below the average, and the commandant's powers of ingenuity were sorely taxed in order to devise means for the proper victualling of the town. In this work he was much helped by three men—Lord Edward Cecil, one of the Prime Minister's sons, Mr. Benjamin Weil, a member of a mercantile house with a great reputation in South Africa, and by Mr. Frank Whiteley, a Yorkshireman, who, after an adventurous life as sportsman and traveller, settled down in Mafeking many years ago, and was its Mayor during the eventful days of the siege.

By the beginning of October Baden-Powell had made his corner—soon to be warmer than perhaps ever he had dreamt of!—all ready against whatever was to be. Everything was in readiness. In a letter written from Mafeking on October 9th the writer says that there was then nothing in the appearance of town or people to indicate the nature of what was coming—men and women were pursuing their ordinary avocations as though the shadow of war was far away instead of being so near. The town was ready and waiting, and meanwhile its usual life went on until the need came for action. Baden-Powell and his garrison had not long to wait, however. On October 11th hostilities began between Great Britain and the South African Republic,

and the armoured train of Mafeking figured conspicuously in the first engagement. On that date it left Mafeking with the last load of women and children, and made its journey southward in safety; but on its return journey it fell into the hands of the Boers, and ere long English readers were informed of its capture. This was the first of the reverses which came in quick succession during the autumn of 1899.

The armoured train of Mafeking consisted of an ordinary four-coupled locomotive, protected in every part by 7-16 in. steel plates, and two bogie trucks, fenced to a height of five feet by stout rails, bolted longitudinally together. Communication with the driver was had by a system of bells and speaking tubes from the trucks, each of which was furnished with a machine gun and had accommodation for fifty men. On the night of October 11th Captain Nesbitt and fifteen men were in charge of the train, and were bringing back in it a further supply of guns and ammunition for the garrison. All went well until a point some forty miles south of Mafeking was reached. There, about midnight, the armoured train ran off the lines, which had been purposely displaced by the Boers. The latter, ambushed close by, immediately poured in volley after volley upon Nesbitt and his little company. The fight went on until morning broke, and it was not until he had fought for several hours that Nesbitt surrendered. The Boers had by that time brought up heavy cannon, and the situation was hopeless. Only the engine-driver escaped by crawling along a dry ditch at the side of the track—the rest fell into the hands of the Boers.

The actual investment of Mafeking began on October 12th, when General Cronje, in command of an army estimated at eight thousand strong, appeared in the neighbourhood. He was well supplied with cannon, but is said to have been surprised to find that there was need for its use, as he had expected that he would be able to occupy the town with very little opposition. Baden-Powell, however, was not at all disposed to yield to the Boer general in any way, and Cronje quickly found that whatever

success might be in store for him would have to be fought for. On the first day of hostilities rather severe fighting took place between the Boers and two squadrons of the Protectorate Regiment under Lord Charles Bentinck and Captain FitzClarence. The Boers are said to have lost over fifty men in this preliminary fight; the British three. Baden-Powell on this day played an ingenious trick upon the besiegers, which resulted in their serious discomfiture. There was a considerable store of dynamite in Mafeking, which might have proved extremely dangerous if a shell had burst in it. Baden-Powell therefore caused two trucks to be filled with it, and sent them down the line attached to an engine, the driver of which was instructed to leave them when in sight of the Boer lines. The enemy, thinking the trucks contained troops, began a smart fire upon them, with the result that the dynamite soon exploded, and caused great havoc amongst the besiegers in its immediate neighbourhood.

The first Boer shell came into the town on October 15th, and from that time until the 24th the bombardment was very heavy. With the beginning of the bombardment began the curious and amusing interchange of letters and communications between the Boer general and the English commandant. Cronje began by proposing that the opposing forces should observe Sunday as a day of rest. Baden-Powell was quite agreeable, and reminded his enemy that it was not according to the recognized rules of civilized warfare that ambulances should be fired upon—a dirty trick of which the Boers had already been guilty. Cronje explained this away and immediately transgressed again, and continued to do so. On October 17th he endeavoured to cut off the water supply, only to find that Baden-Powell's ever resourceful mind had thought of all possible difficulties and dangers, and had made provision about wells and springs. This done, the Boer commandant again resorted to letter-writing. He asked Baden-Powell quite innocently whether it would not save much bloodshed if the British surrendered at once. Baden-Powell asked when the bloodshed would begin—a laconic form

of reply which appears to have irritated and puzzled the Boer leader. Cronje now began to bombard the town more furiously than ever, throwing a large number of shells into it within the next few days. On the 21st Baden-Powell sent home the following characteristic telegram, which has been talked of and laughed over thousands of times since :—

"*October 21st.*—All well. Four hours' bombardment. One dog killed."

Cronje, being unaware of this terrible effect of his artillery practice, now sent another letter to Baden-Powell, hinting once more at a British surrender. Baden-Powell replied that he would let General Cronje know when the garrison had had enough. Evidently disposed to give them as much as possible, and in as short a time as might be, Cronje renewed the bombardment, firing hundreds of shells into the town within the next thirty-six hours. Then Cronje wrote again, telling Baden-Powell that he had better surrender, for he was bringing a heavy siege gun to bear upon the town, and would shortly blow it all to pieces. Baden-Powell replied that he thanked General Cronje for the news, and would give him some information in return. He then went on to say that the town was surrounded by mines, which could be exploded automatically, that he had placed a yellow flag above the building in which the Boer prisoners were confined in order to give General Cronje information of his friends' exact whereabouts, and finally that the persistent shelling of the women's and children's laager would make a precedent for the British army which would eventually invade the Transvaal. Cronje replied to this budget of very pertinent information by a renewed shelling of the town, this time doing a good deal of damage.

On October 27th a brilliant passage of arms took place. Captain FitzClarence, taking some men of the Protectorate Regiment and of the Cape Police, made an attack by night upon the enemy's trenches, and gave the Boers a taste of the bayonet. Over one hundred of the enemy were killed on this occasion, the

An every-day Scene in the Market.

British loss being very slight indeed. The trenches upon which the attack had been made were taken, but were found to be untenable. Four days later there was another fine bit of fighting at Cannon Kopje, the key of the British position, which was resolutely attacked by the Boers early in the morning. The British South African Police, commanded by Colonel Walford, met this attack—which was made under cover of very heavy gun fire—with splendid resolution, and finally beat the Boers off with heavy loss on both sides. It must have become increasingly evident to Cronje that Mafeking was not to be taken so easily as he had at first anticipated, and that its commander was as capable an exponent of the art of war as he was an amusing and exasperating correspondent.

Whether Baden-Powell thought the corner which had been given him warm enough for his taste one does not know—that it was an extremely busy corner, and that he had many demands upon his time, is certain. He was the brain of the whole town—from him, as from some wonderful reservoir of strength and judgment, went all the various promptings, encouragements, and counsels which made men strong. He was tireless in his labours—those who were with him speak of the marvellous way in which he seemed to bear a thousand things in mind. It is very easy to sit at home and talk of the siege of Mafeking, but there are few people who can at all realize what it must have meant to Baden-Powell to feel himself the head and front of his little force, and that upon his courage and determination everything depended. The contest, as it began, looked so unequal—on one hand stood a little irregular band of some nine hundred men, on the other an army of eight thousand. But great general and bold leader as Cronje is said to be, he had more than met his match in Baden-Powell, who had sat down in the warm corner which he had desired, and had made up his mind that he would keep the English flag flying over it until such times as relief came to him. Let the relief come soon or late, Mafeking must be held against the Boers at all costs.

## II.

### WARMER AND WARMER

ERE the siege of Mafeking had been in progress many weeks three incidents occurred which gave something of zest to the proceedings. The first was the retirement—carried out in obvious disgust—of General Cronje; the second the capture of Lady Sarah Wilson by the Boers, and her exchange for Viljoen, a noted horse-thief; the third the sending of a very characteristic letter from Baden-Powell to the enemy.

During the whole of November operations on both sides were carried on with regularity and steadiness. Baden-Powell had elaborated a system by which the inhabitants of Mafeking were warned by the ringing of signal bells whenever shells were approaching the town, and as the Boer missiles were sighted, the folk on every side made for the shell-proof shelters which had been constructed in all quarters. Baden-Powell himself was perpetually on the look-out, and he might have had a thousand eyes in his head, so carefully and zealously did he attend to the various matters requiring his attention. While he took particular care of the town and its people, he was not forgetful of the enemy's presence, and continually harassed and worried Cronje and his men by sorties and assaults, in which the British usually got the best of it. The British trenches and outposts were gradually pushed forward, and between the defenders and the Boers a continual exchange of desultory firing went on. Cronje became somewhat weary of the slow progress of affairs. He had expected to occupy Mafeking, and from it to overrun Rhodesia, with little delay; the determined resistance offered to his attack chafed and infuriated him. The news of Lord Methuen's advance upon the Modder River presently drew Cronje away, and with

him went a considerable number of the besiegers, Commandant Snyman being left in charge of those who remained.

Early in December came the affair of the exchange of Lady Sarah Wilson for Viljoen. When the siege began, Lady Sarah, who was acting as special correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, and whose husband, Captain Gordon Wilson, was a member of Baden-Powell's staff, left Mafeking and rode across country to Setlagoli, where she met friends. Finding that her presence there was likely to cause discomfort to the latter, she went on to Mosuti, where she stayed at the house of a colonial farmer. From this place she kept up communication by means of native runners, but at the end of a month set out, in company with a young Boer who was induced to represent himself as her brother, for Vryburg, where she obtained news from the loyalists. Suspicion as to her real character appears to have been roused here, and she and her escort were severely examined by the Landrost ere they could get out of the town again. Lady Sarah now determined to return to Mafeking, and set out thither, only to be made prisoner by some of General Snyman's burghers. Snyman refused to allow her to proceed to Mafeking or to return to her friends at Setlagoli, and gave her the alternative of being sent prisoner to Zeerust or exchanged for Viljoen, whose previous record as a horse-thief appears to have been a somewhat dark one. Lady Sarah at first refused to be exchanged under these conditions, but the transaction was soon afterwards completed, and she returned to the beleaguered town. Her account of what she had seen in the Boer camp must have had a reassuring and confidence-inspiring effect upon the garrison of Mafeking. She told them that, from the information she had gained, the Boers were already wearied of the war, and that their losses, from the continual vigilance of Baden-Powell's men, were very heavy. She had found the besiegers' camp dirty, badly equipped, and poorly supplied with food, and had observed that General Snyman was unpopular with the men serving under him.

It may be that this information had something to do with

the characteristic letter which Baden-Powell addressed to the besieging forces early in December—a letter which aroused vast indignation amongst the Boer leaders, and created much interest and not a little admiration in England for its writer's good sense and wise counsel. It was addressed, "To the Burghers under arms round Mafeking," and ran as follows:—

"BURGHERS,

"I address you in this manner because I have only recently learned how you have been intentionally kept in the dark by your officers, the Government, and the newspapers as to what is happening in other parts of South Africa. As the officer commanding Her Majesty's troops on this border, I think it right to point out clearly the inevitable result of your remaining longer under arms against Great Britain. You are aware that the present war was caused by the invasion of British territory by your forces without justifiable reasons. Your leaders do not tell you that so far your forces have only met the advanced guard of the British forces. The circumstances have changed within the last week. The main body of the British are now daily arriving by thousands from England, Canada, India, and Australia, and are about to advance through the country. In a short time the Republic will be in the hands of the English, and no sacrifice of life on your part can stop it.

"The question now that you have to put to yourselves before it is too late is: Is it worth while losing your lives in a vain attempt to stop the invasion or take a town beyond your borders, which, if taken, will be of no use to you?

"I may tell you that Mafeking cannot be taken by sitting down and looking at it, for we have ample supplies for several months. The Staats Artillery has done very little damage, and we are now protected both by troops and mines. Your presence here and elsewhere under arms cannot stop the British advancing through your country. Your leaders and newspapers are also trying to make you believe that some foreign combination or Power is likely to intervene in your behalf against England. It

is not in keeping with their pretence that your side is going to be victorious, nor in accordance with facts. The Republic having declared war, and taken the offensive, cannot claim intervention on their behalf. The German Emperor is at present in England, and fully sympathizes with us. The American Government has warned others of its intention to side with England should any Power intervene. France has large interests in the goldfields, identical with those of England. Italy is entirely in accord with us. Russia has no cause to interfere. The war is of one Government against another, and not of a people against another people.

"The duty assigned to my troops is to sit still here until the proper time arrives, and then to fight and kill until you give in. You, on the other hand, have other interests to think of, your families, farms, and their safety. Your leaders have caused the destruction of farms, and have fired on women and children. Our men are becoming hard to restrain in consequence. They have also caused the invasion of Kaffir territory, looting their cattle, and have thus induced them to rise and invade your country and kill your burghers. As one white man to another, I warned General Cronje, on November 14th, that this would occur. Yesterday I heard that more Kaffirs were rising. I have warned General Snyman accordingly. Great bloodshed and destruction of farms threaten you on all sides.

"I wish to offer you a chance of avoiding it. My advice to you is to return to your homes without delay and remain peaceful till the war is over. Those who do this before the 13th will, as far as possible, be protected, as regards yourselves, your families, and property, from confiscation, looting, and other penalties to which those remaining under arms will be subjected when the invasion takes place. Secret agents will communicate to me the names of those who do. Those who do not avail themselves of the terms now offered may be sure that their property will be confiscated when the troops arrive. Each man must be prepared to hand over a rifle and one hundred and fifty rounds of ammunition. The above terms do not apply to officers and members of the

Staats Artillery, who may surrender as prisoners of war at any time, nor to rebels on British territory. It is probable that my force will shortly take the offensive. To those who after this warning defer their submission till too late I can offer no promise. They will have only themselves to blame for injury to and loss of property. They and their families may afterwards suffer.

(Signed) "R. S. S. BADEN-POWELL,
"Mafeking, Dec. 10th." "Colonel.

It is almost unnecessary to say that the Boers did not take this advice, and that their leaders endeavoured to falsify Baden-Powell's statements and predictions. Events went on pretty much as usual from the date of this letter until Christmas. The previous week had been fairly quiet, save for a continual artillery duel between the garrison's Nordenfeldt and the Boers' big gun, and the besieged had been encouraged a good deal by the news of British successes. A two days' truce was agreed upon for Christmas, and on Sunday, the 24th, the children, who had spent most of their time during the previous two months in the gloom of the shell-proof refuges, were brought into the town and treated to a Christmas-tree, which had been provided by a Committee of which Lady Sarah Wilson was the moving spirit. That night—Christmas Eve—there was a special service in the English church, garnished and decorated for the occasion. One of the Boer shells had struck the church during a previous bombardment and had damaged the fabric, but in spite of this the congregation was cheerful and happy, and sang hymns and carols, though those of the men who were there were armed, booted, and spurred, and ready for any emergency.

There was another day's truce on Christmas Day, but at night rumours of a sortie which Baden-Powell intended to make on Game Tree Fort began to spread amongst the officers. At dawn next morning, December 26th, the sortie was made. Two squadrons of the Protectorate Regiment and one squadron of the Bechuanaland Rifles, accompanied by three guns and an armoured train, advanced upon Game Tree Fort in the twilight

and began an attack, which Baden-Powell in his despatch to Cape Town characterizes as being "carried out and pressed home with the greatest gallantry and steadiness under very hot fire." The action began by an artillery duel, in which the British Maxim joined as the daylight increased, and was soon general in the vicinity of the fort, which was situated about a mile and a half from the town. At sunrise the attacking force, under Captains Vernon and FitzClarence, was ready to rush the Boer position. Those watching the fight from a little distance saw the men of the Protectorate and Bechuanaland squadrons moving rapidly upon the fort, and heard a continuous rattle of musketry as they drew to close quarters with the enemy. For a while there was some anxiety amongst the watching staff; then it was seen that the British troops were slowly drawing back, "the fort," said Baden-Powell in his despatch, "being practically impregnable." Then came the news of the repulse and the opinion of the commanding officer that the position was too difficult to attempt a second time. But it was not until the list of casualties was made out that anyone not actually engaged in it knew how gallant and strenuous the attack had been. Out of the attacking force of about one hundred men, only one half came back scatheless. Captains Vernon and Sandford, Lieutenant Paton, and twenty-one rank and file were killed; Captain FitzClarence and twenty-two rank and file were wounded; three troopers were taken prisoners. Most of the casualties occurred in the final attempt to storm the fort, and Captain Vernon, in particular, showed magnificent courage. Wounded more than once during the attack, he kept on fighting until he was shot dead. Little wonder that the Boers were greatly impressed by the courage of the besiegers, and that General Snyman began to feel still more doubtful as to the success of his forces!

On the evening of this day the dead were buried in the cemetery of Mafeking, the enemy out of respect for their brave opponents ceasing fire while the ceremony was in process. The Boers, indeed, on this occasion had showed themselves more

humane than usual, and had assisted the British to succour the wounded men of the attacking party when the ambulance went out after the fight was over. Still, it was deemed inadvisable to fire the usual volley over the dead, and so the men who had fallen were laid to rest in comparative silence. The non-commissioned officers and men were interred in a long trench, folded in white calico; the officers were buried in coffins at a little distance. So the day came to an end with the sound of the Last Post. It might have been a more successful day had it not been for treachery, for there was no doubt that the news of the intended British attack on Game Tree Fort had been communicated to the Boers, who had immediately hastened to strengthen their defences and to tear up part of the railway along which the armoured train would proceed, but in spite of the non-success of the attack, the garrison of Mafeking was still confident and in good spirits.

The last days of the old year passed somewhat quietly when compared with the stirring events which had immediately succeeded Christmas Day. In one respect the garrison and the inhabitants were in somewhat better case—every day was making it evident that the Boers would not take the town save by extraordinary means. The spirit of its defenders grew stronger and more indomitable as each sun rose and sank, and every man was determined that there should be no surrender. There can be no doubt that the maintenance of this brave spirit was largely due to the example and cheering words of Baden-Powell, who from his bomb-proof headquarters in the centre of the town dominated and inspired everything. One may well feel a wondering curiosity as to what he felt as he thought and planned and kept a watchful eye on all that was going on. He had never been in such a warm corner as this in his life, but one may be certain that it was not too warm for him. There are men who rise to the greatest heights at the moment of greatest need, and there were needs coming upon Mafeking which were likely to try the heart and resolution of even so brave a man as its watchful commandant.

## III.

### SITTING TIGHT

On New Year's Day, 1900, the Boers began a new species of assault upon Mafeking. They fired several nine-pounder shells into the laager reserved for women and children, killing one child and injuring two others. They also fired on the convent and on the hospital. Baden-Powell sent a vigorous protest against this cowardly action to General Snyman, but the same tactics were pursued at intervals during the next few weeks. On January 3rd a smart artillery duel took place between the besieged and the enemy. During the previous night the British artillery had been concentrated in a fresh position, and when it came into play it wrought considerable damage amongst the Boer guns, one of which, at least, was thrown out of action. On the 6th the enemy threw a number of shells into the market-square, but did little damage, and on the 15th they were compelled to retire with their ninety-four-pounder and their Krupp gun to more distant positions, the besieged having successfully pushed out trenches and sharpshooters towards their big gun battery. In his despatch of the 17th Baden-Powell remarked that he had now driven back the Boers on three sides well out of rifle-range, and had opened grazing for cattle on the east side of the town. On the 16th the Boers again resorted to questionable tactics. They fired a ninety-four-pounder shell into the convalescent hospital and partly

Strolling Home in the Morning.

"Halt! who comes there?"

wrecked it, and afterwards fired on an officer and orderly who went out under the white flag. What the garrison must have thought of these outrages one need not conjecture.

About this time the question of food supply began to agitate the minds of those responsible for the beleaguered town. For the first two months of the siege privation had not been felt, but in the despatches coming to hand about the middle of January there was evidence that provisions were beginning to run short. Oats were no longer given to horses, but saved for men; tinned milk and matches were taken charge of by the military authorities; and food generally began to be sparingly used. Before this the Kaffirs in the native quarter had eaten mules killed by the Boer guns. But apart from this shortening of rations a spirit of courage and determination filled the garrison. In the despatches from Major F. D. Baillie (war correspondent of the *Morning Post*) which got through about this time, a phrase occurs again and again which shows how bravely everybody was keeping up in Mafeking—"All is well." Certainly there was a desire on the part of somebody—whom one shrewdly suspects to have been the commandant himself—to make things as pleasant as possible. An agricultural show was held on January 21st and was a great success. On Sundays Baden-Powell organized concerts and musical entertainments, and himself appeared to delight perhaps the strangest audiences he had ever played to in his life. On one occasion he impersonated Paderewski in the first part of the performance, and a cockney in the second, winding up by playing "Home, Sweet Home" on a mouth-organ! One would like to have been present at that performance—despite the fact that Snyman and his Boers were still eager to seize the little town.

In his despatch of February 3rd Baden-Powell reported various artillery duels between that date and January 23rd, and remarked that General Snyman had practically admitted shelling the women and children's laagers, and that he, in consequence, had informed him that he had placed the Boer prisoners in these places in order to protect them from deliberate bombardment. But another foe

was now at hand. Dysentery broke out amongst the garrison and fever amongst the children. In a despatch from Reuter's special correspondent, dated February 19th, the first terrible picture of the siege comes into view. He speaks of rations of weevily biscuit and horse-flesh; of typhoid and malaria in the women's laager, into which the Boers still threw shells; of the children's graveyard daily receiving new victims; and of the natives wandering about, gaunt and hungry. Up to that date nearly three hundred persons had been killed or wounded or died of disease. But there was no talk of surrender, even though the hope long deferred made many hearts sick. All through February the state of affairs was unchanged with the exception that the Boer attrocities seemed to increase. Not content with firing on the women and children's laager, and on hospital and convent, they treated natives who tried to leave the town with great cruelty, stripping and flogging the women, shooting down the men, and generally adopting the most brutal means of warfare.

On February 26th came the Queen's message to Baden-Powell and his little garrison and gave them new heart and courage. About the same time news of the relief of Kimberley was received, but there was small prospect of similar help coming so quickly to Mafeking, where diphtheria had broken out amongst the children. During the early days of March a good deal of fighting went on in the brick-fields, and the enemy's big gun began to be very active. In his despatch of March 13th, however, Baden-Powell reported that the enemy's cordon had been much relaxed, and that he had captured twenty-six head of their cattle and killed twelve Boers. Then the bombardment began again, and continued with varying success on the part of the enemy. On March 24th the Boers evacuated their trenches in the brick-fields, and they were taken possession of by the garrison, who at this time, according to Major Baillie's despatch to the *Morning Post* of the last-named date, were less pressed than at any period since the beginning of the siege. Some little diversion was caused on Sunday, March 25th, by the holding of a Siege Exhibition,

at which prizes were awarded for such exhibits as collections of shells (Boer shells!), models of fortifications, and the like.

Not only food, but money was running short in Mafeking now, and the ingenious brain of its commander was called upon to supply the deficiency. He instituted a paper currency for sums as low as threepence, and also issued bank-notes for £1 and £5. The postage stamps becoming exhausted, a new supply, stamped with the words "Mafeking Besieged," was produced. However short the money supply was, however, it seems to have made little difference to people who wished to spend it, since one hears of unexploded shells being sold as curiosities for as much as twelve guineas each.

In his despatch of March 27th, Baden-Powell, after beginning with the familiar "All Well," which sounds so strange to folk who were wondering how Mafeking was contriving to hold out as she did, goes on to say that they are experiencing the hottest shelling of the siege, but that the town was comparatively free from musketry fire. The Boers, in fact, were being steadily pushed back, the besiegers never losing an opportunity of advancing their trenches nearer to the enemy's position, and the latter were also worried by the advance of Colonel Plumer's relief column. On March 31st, heavy firing was heard to the northward of the town, and the enemy were seen to be going in a northerly direction in great haste, taking three field guns with them. The garrison at once opened fire on their forts, and continued it until the firing northward ceased. Next morning General Snyman sent a message to Baden-Powell requesting him to send out an ambulance to bring in the dead of Colonel Plumer's force, who, according to his version, had been slain by hundreds. When the ambulance reached the scene of operation, three bodies were discovered.

About the beginning of April, General Snyman was relieved of his command, in which he had had no more success than the redoubtable Cronje, by Commandant Botha. This made no difference to the garrison, who were determined to hold out two months longer if necessary. Some considerable help was given

to the commissariat department at this period by a Scotsman, Mr. Sims, who invented a food called sowan porridge, made from the husks of oats. This proved very nourishing, and if not exactly appetizing, was wholesome, and much to be preferred to nothing when the question of going supperless to bed came on. A statement prepared by Captain Ryan, head of the commissariat department, shows how things were going in April:—

"The total number of white men is approximately 1150, of white women 400, and of white children 300. The coloured population consists of some 2000 men, 2000 women, and 3000 children.

"Both the white and coloured men originally received eight ounces of bread. The allowance has now been reduced to six, but a quart of soup is given to make up the deficiency. Half a gallon of sowan porridge a day will sustain life. The recipients are of three classes: those who receive it in lieu of two ounces of bread; those who wish to purchase food over and above the quantity to which they are entitled; those who are absolutely destitute, both black and white, and who receive the porridge free. It has been suggested that the natives should not be charged for sowan porridge, but it is thought unwise to pauperize either blacks or whites. If any profit has been made from the sale by the end of the siege, it will be employed in buying grain for the many native women and children in Mafeking who have been involved in a quarrel which is not theirs.

"The horse soup is made from the carcases of animals which had ceased to be serviceable and those killed by the enemy's fire, as well as horses and donkeys purchased from individuals who can no longer afford to keep them. This soup is unpopular among the natives, but this is due rather to prejudice than to its quality.

"The distribution of supplies is entirely under Imperial control. The Army Service Corps possesses a slaughter-house, a bakery, and a grocery at which the authorities receive and distribute all vegetables, and it receives and distributes milk to the hospital, to women and children, and to men who have been medically certified to need it.

"At present the hospital is supplied with white bread, and it is hoped that the supply will be continued. Hospital comforts are issued to such as are in need of them, both in and out patients, on receipt of an order from a medical officer. For the nurses and doctors, who work day and night, the authorities endeavoured to provide slightly better rations than those available for the general community. Our sources of supply have been chiefly through Mr. Weil, who had a large stock on hand for the provisioning of the garrison, until the contract terminated at the beginning of February. Since then supplies have been collected from various merchants, storekeepers, and private persons, and stored in the army Service Corps depôt, and from the original Army Service Corps stock, of which forage and oats formed a great proportion. Fresh beef is obtained by purchase from a private individual named White, and in a lesser degree from the natives.

"Breadstuffs are obtained, like groceries, by commandeering the stocks of various merchants and private persons."

Shortly after this report was published, the special correspondent of Reuter's Agency announced that a further reduction in the supply of breadstuffs had taken place. "We are now able to receive only four ounces daily," he continued. "This, however, has been to some extent compensated by the issue of sowan porridge to whites as well as blacks. We have still a fair supply of fresh vegetables, which the Chinese are retailing at famine prices. As vegetables, however, are perishable commodities they are still cheap in comparison with whisky, which is 25*s.* a bottle. Eggs are 18*s.* a dozen, fowls 20*s.* each, jam 2*s.* 6*d.* a small tin."

The same correspondent, alas! remarks in a despatch of somewhat later date that "excellent brawn is now being made, and is eaten by both whites and blacks. It is made from ox and horse hides." He adds with a brevity which has a good deal of pathos and humour in it, that "the garrison is very cheerful, very dry, and very hungry." Most of the necessarily brief despatches from Mafeking in the most trying days of the siege have a spice of humour and a good deal of pathos in them. On May 3rd, Lady

Sarah Wilson cabled the following laconic message to Lady Georgiana Curzon:—"Mafeking, May 3rd.—Breakfast consisted of horse sausages; lunch, minced mule and curried locusts. Well." "There is great demand for horse side and brawn," says Reuter's special correspondent on May 5th. But perhaps the most significant, and certainly the most impressive, message of all was that of Major Baillie, dated May 1st, which will surely be remembered when many incidents of the Boer War are forgotten:—

"This morning the Boers attacked us.

"The result was as usual.

"There is an aching void here.

"Pass the loaf."

Those of us who sit at home at our entire or comparative ease can scarcely comprehend the full meaning of these messages, nor of the heroism of the men who, sorely tried by hunger and disease, were keeping up the flag with such stern, immovable determination. In the town, hunger and sickness; outside the town, an enemy so bitterly unscrupulous as to observe no civilized conditions of warfare, and whose leaders did not scruple to fire on women, children, and sick men—here was a situation in which surely nobody but the most courageous could have preserved a cheerful confidence. How that confidence struck Baden-Powell may be judged from the despatch which he sent to Lord Roberts on the 200th day of the siege. "After 200 days' siege," he said, "I desire to bring to your lordship's notice the exceptionally good spirit of loyalty that pervades all classes of this garrison. The patience of everybody in Mafeking in making the best of things under the long strain of anxiety, hardship, and privation is beyond all praise, and a revelation to me. The men, half of whom are unaccustomed to the use of arms, have adapted themselves to their duties with the greatest zeal, readiness, and pluck, and the devotion of the women is remarkable. With such a spirit our organization runs like clockwork, and I have every hope it will pull us successfully through."

## IV.

### THE LAST DAYS

About the end of April a new Boer commandant appeared on the scene at Mafeking in the person of Sarel Eloff, a near kinsman of President Kruger. He was the fifth Transvaal officer to be placed in charge of the Boer attack, and it was rumoured that he was specially ordered to succeed where the elder and younger Cronjes, Snyman, and Botha had failed. But the siege had now been in progress for seven months, and the Boers were in no better position than at first. So far as the actual taking of the town was concerned they were in a much worse position, for Baden-Powell's watchfulness and daring had driven back their lines, wrecked a good many of their works, and done more damage to their forces than they had succeeded in effecting amongst the garrison. From a military point of view there was now little, if any, advantage likely to accrue to the Boers by this capture of Mafeking. If Cronje had reached the town by assault during the first few days of the siege he would have been able to command a large stretch of country, and in a position to dominate Rhodesia, but the lapse of several months had changed everything, and from the tactician's point of view there was nothing to be gained by the fall of Mafeking. Nevertheless the Boers continued to surround the place, and were able on more than one occasion to drive back the relieving force under Colonel Plumer, who advanced at various times to within a very near distance of the town. What the feelings of the besieged, weary with constant watching and weak with hunger and privation, must have been when it was known that their would-be succourers had been within six miles of them,

and had then been obliged to fall back, may be better imagined than described.

However sick with hope deferred some of the folk in the little town may have been, there was no feeling of despair in the heart of the man by whose genius and energy the defence was finally conducted to such a glorious issue. It is almost—perhaps entirely—beyond the powers of the stay-at-home, fireside-loving Englishman to comprehend the extraordinary strength of purpose and firmness of will shown by Baden-Powell during this historic siege. If one could realize what it must have meant to be shut up in Mafeking during all those weary months, with heavy responsibilities of various natures crowding upon one, and conducting all things to final victory, one might understand Baden-Powell. When the siege was over, he, with the modesty which is not the least charm of his character, strove to give praise to others, instead of allowing it to be showered solely upon himself. "Many nice things have been said about me at home," he remarked, "but it is an easy thing to be the figure-head of a ship." What sort of figure-head Baden-Powell was may be gathered from the following interesting sketch of him, extracted from a despatch of the special correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* during the last weeks of the siege:—

"He is a wonderfully tireless man, ever on the alert, ever with one eye on the enemy and the other divided between the town and that nightmare, the native stadt. Some say that he never sleeps, and I half believe the statement. I have frequently seen him myself at the peep-of-day crossing the veldt on his return to town after visiting all the works, with the customary tune on his lips; and half an hour afterwards he was on the roof with his glasses glued to his eyes, having an early look at the enemy. Later on he takes a constitutional walk up and down before his quarters like one doing sentry-go. An hour or so later he is on the stoep writing his diary, generally with his left hand, for with his wonderful foresight he has recognized that in pursuing his trade he may lose his right, and he does not wish to be left in the

lurch. Again he is on the roof once more, having another look at the enemy, and if everything is particularly quiet, he trusts the look-out men and goes to his nook to dip into a novel or have a stretch under his mosquito curtain. I always know that he is there as I pass when I see a pair of tan boots sticking out.

"He spends the rest of the day doing a thousand and one things, receiving reports, adjusting differences, learning from his staff all they know, powwowing with Lord Edward Cecil, his chief staff officer, discovering how much food we have from the D.A.A.G., and suggesting how it may be conserved, and how much per head shall be served out to each soul under his care—all the time with an eye fixed upon Snyman and his horde, reading their thoughts, knowing what they are about to do, and planning a checkmate. In the evening he goes up to the hospital to inquire after his wounded—he never misses this visit—and if a victim of the siege is to be buried it is ten to one that we see him at the graveside. The Colonel trusts his command, but like the good general that he is, leaves nothing to chance, and always has the concentrated knowledge of every officer in his head. Many stories are told by our sentries of one who silently steals out of the blackness of the night and is on them before they have time to challenge. He asks a question or gives a suggestion and a cheery word, and then departs as silently as he came. They even tell of a bearded stranger dressed in grey tweed who has the stature of B.-P., and strolls around the works and makes such remarks as 'Keep a keen eye in that direction; you never know what may be stirring or where they are.' He goes away and they know that he is the commander. Napoleon himself never kept keener vigil than

A Cape Boy Sentry.

B.-P., or had a greater grasp of what was going on around him. Added to this night-and-day round, our Colonel even directs the other force away up north that he never sees, yet every movement of which he is acquainted with. Nevertheless, the strain, the anxiety that must be there, despite the external show of light-heartedness, the constant watchfulness, and the worries connected with the interior economy of the town, would have soured and broken down and turned grey-headed many another man. But B.-P.'s temperament preserves him, and to-day (April) he is as fresh, as keen, and as full of vigour as when he started in October."

Perhaps an even more remarkable testimony than this was that which came from General Pretorius, who, while in hospital, recovering from the wound he received at Elands Laagte, discussed the sieges of Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking with an English friend.

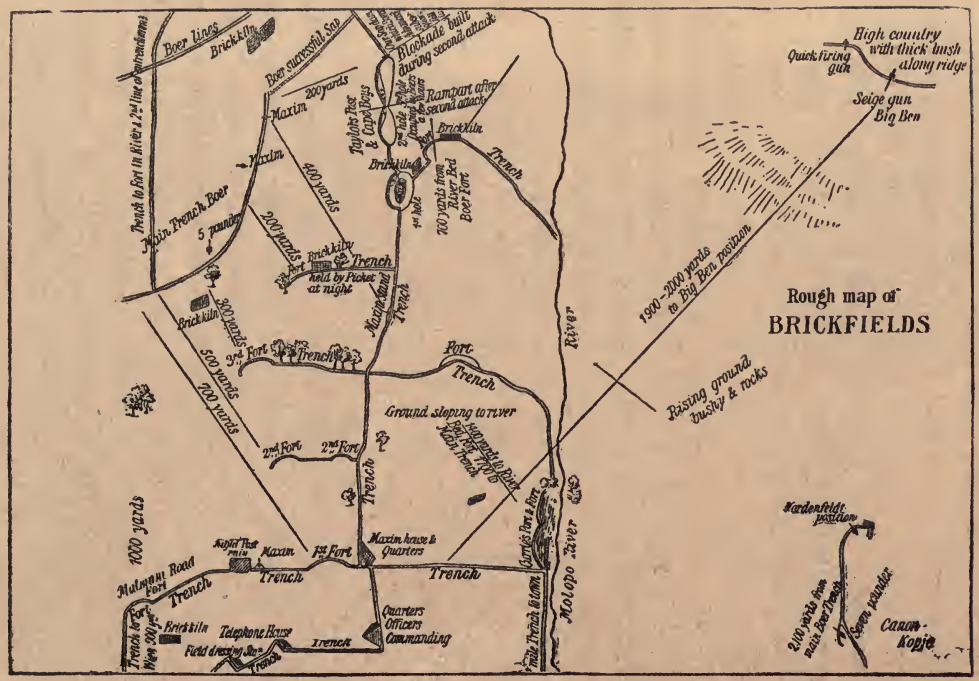
"The Ladysmith men," he said, "were good, but there were 10,000 of them, and all fighting men. Kimberley was remarkable because of the large number of its civilian population and natives; but the siege of Mafeking, however it may end, will always live in South African history, because a flat and absolutely unprotected country village (for that is what Mafeking is) has by the genius of one man been defended, and defended against the most strenuous efforts not only of our leading general, Cronje, but of his successors. I should like to take you outside Mafeking where I have been, and look at the place. You would have thought that the 8000 with which we once surrounded it could have got in on any night they chose. We had the best of Cronje's burghers there, but it is no confession of cowardice on our part to say that we knew that Baden-Powell was not only prepared for every surprise of ours, but that he was quite ready to spring surprises upon us at any moment. And though I think that we shall eventually take Mafeking, it will be by starvation and not by attack. Our burghers have not exhibited fear on any occasion, but I do not think they will tackle Colonel Baden-Powell."

It was scarcely probable that the man, then feared by one of the

most capable of the Boer generals, should be outwitted by a comparatively young officer like Eloff, who must necessarily have been somewhat discouraged by the failure of Cronje, Snyman, and Botha. Eloff, however, was not wanting in courage or ability, and he seems to have been more daring than any of the Boer leaders who had preceded him. He arrived before Mafeking during the last week in April, and on the 24th the garrison received information from natives that a determined assault was to be made upon the town. Something in the nature of a feeble fusillade was begun by the Boers next day, but it was extremely futile, and the garrison thought it scarcely worth their while to reply to it. Indeed, there was so little doing on the part of the Boers at this stage of the long-drawn-out proceedings that the besieged were able to devote some of their energies—the energies of starving men!—to getting up a military tournament, which was successfully held on Sunday, April 29th.

Now occurred another of the little episodes which, when reported to the folk who were looking on at the game from such a tremendous distance, made everybody wonder what sort of man this wonderful Baden-Powell could be that he could crack jokes while he and his men were half starved to death. It came to the knowledge of Commandant Eloff that the garrison of Mafeking amused itself on Sundays in various pleasant ways, whereupon he wrote a letter to Colonel Baden-Powell saying that he heard there was cricket and singing, and dancing and tournaments in Mafeking on Sundays, and might he and his men come in and join in the festivities, for it was dull outside. One would like to know if that message was intended to be serious, or if it was "writ sarcastic." Anyway, Baden-Powell replied to it in fitting terms. Referring to Eloff's remarks about the Sunday cricket match, he said that it would be better to postpone the return match until the one then in progress was finished, and then suggested that as the garrison were already 200 not out, and as Cronje, Snyman, and others had not been successful, a further change of bowling might be advisable.

Eloff's answer to this characteristic Baden-Powellism was


Rough map of
BRICKFIELDS
High country with thick bush along ridge
Quick firing gun
Seige gun Big Ben
1900–2000 yards to Big Ben position
Rising ground bushy & rocks
Boer lines
Brickkiln
Boer successful Sap
200 yards
Maxim
Blockade built during second attack
Taylors Post & Cape Boys
Rampart after second attack
Brickkiln
Trench
Main Trench Boer
5 pounder
400 yards
200 yards
Brickkiln
Trench
held by Picket at night
Maxim Stand
Trench
Brickkiln
300 yards
3rd Fort
Trench
500 yards
700 yards
Fort
Trench
River
Ground sloping to river
2nd Fort
2nd Fort
Trench
1000 yards
Maxim
1st Fort
Maxim house & Quarters
Trench
Trench
Trench
Quarters Officers Commanding
Telephone House
Field dressing Stn
Trench
Molopo River
Nordenfeldt position
Seven pounder
Canon-Kopje

another attack on May 1st. "It was the usual sort of performance," said Major Baillie in his despatch to the *Morning Post*, "the Boers blazed away for two or three hours, but did not hit anybody. They are doing themselves no good, and not attaining any object whatever." Then on Sunday, May 6th, the enemy committed another of the discreditable breaches of good faith which have been such an unfortunate feature of their conduct throughout the whole war. Sunday, by their own request, had invariably been observed as a day of truce, but on this particular Sunday a party of Boers made their way to the east of Cannon Kopje, shot one of the British South African Police, who was guarding cattle, and stole the horses and mules under his care.

On May 12th, Eloff made his long-threatened and would-be final attack upon the town. At four o'clock in the morning the garrison was roused by heavy firing, and it soon became evident that something important was afoot. It was soon seen that the native stadt was in flames, and presently came the news that the fort occupied by the British South African Police had been taken by the enemy. As events proved later, Eloff and seven hundred men had advanced along the river-bed and got into Mafeking. They began to loot and to destroy immediately. The garrison, realizing that at last they were in for such a fight as they had long desired, worked like heroes, aided by the Baralongs, and fighting became general. Even the prisoners under sentence in gaol were released and armed, and fought manfully with the rest. All through the day the fight went on, the Boers being gradually surrounded by squadrons under Captain FitzClarence, Captain Marsh, and Captain Bentinck, and by the Baralongs under Major Godley. Finally the Boers were cornered—one party in the British South African Police Fort; another in one of the native kraals; a third in the kopje. Hundreds of them broke away, many to be shot as they fled. At last the British artillery got within forty yards of their principal position, and then Eloff surrendered. He had kept his word and got into Mafeking, and there for awhile he was to stay—as prisoner. He and his men were marched in batches

into the town, and were received in silence by the British, but with hooting by the natives whose stadt they had burned. Baden-Powell's reception of the Boer commandant was interesting, and characteristic of the former. "This is Commandant Eloff, sir," said the officer in charge of the Boer leader. "Good evening, commandant," answered Baden-Powell. "Won't you come in and have some dinner?"

That was a great night in Mafeking. Men went about the town singing "Rule Britannia" and "God save the Queen," and cheering themselves hoarse. In the regimental messes and the hotels liquor which had been carefully hoarded away was brought out and healths were drunk. If they had only had definite news of it, the rejoicings would have been greater, for while the Mafeking garrison was engaged with Eloff and his men, the relief columns under Mahon and Plumer were drawing nearer to the town, and the long-desired succour was close at hand.

## V.

### THE RELIEF AND THE EMPIRE

When Baden-Powell sent the famous despatch to Lord Roberts in which he drew the latter's attention to the fact that the garrison had now undergone a two hundred days' siege, the reply came back, "Relief on May 18th." This reply was pretty much in the nature of a prophecy, for the actual relief of Mafeking took place on May 17th. During the first two weeks of the month the two columns under Mahon and Plumer had been steadily forcing their way towards the beleaguered town, and on the 15th they joined hands, at a point thirty miles west of the town. As the relief columns drew nearer, the Boers, realizing that their efforts were hopeless, retreated in all directions, and on the 16th the besieged chiefly occupied themselves in watching Mahon's and Plumer's forces shelling the Boers out of their camps and laagers. In the evening Major Kerr-Davis and a few men of the Imperial Light Infantry rode into the town. Their reception was characteristically British. Stopping to tell a passer-by that they formed the advance guard of the relieving force, they were answered in laconic fashion, "Oh, yes; I heard you were knocking about outside somewhere!" But a good deal—more than a good deal!—of feeling doubtless lay behind that apparently careless answer. It may have been hard for the besieged to realize that Mafeking was really relieved at last. But on the

morning of the 17th the relief force was in the town in strength, and the Boers were vanishing on the horizon.

It is difficult to realize the feelings of the besieged and of their succourers when the final meeting between them took place. The columns under Mahon and Plumer had worked hard and with true British zeal, and it must have aroused thoughts which could scarcely be put into words when the object of the expedition was achieved. Mr. Filson Young, special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, accompanying the relief columns, gives the following account of the first glimpse of the little town:—

"As the sky brightened before us Mafeking was eagerly looked for, but for a long time each successive rise only showed us another beyond which hid the desired view. But at last, while some of us were buying eggs at a Kaffir kraal, a more adventurous person climbed upon a rubbish heap and shouted, 'There's Mafeking.' There was a rush for the coign of vantage, and a great levelling of glasses. There it lay, sure enough, the little town that we had come so far to see—a tiny cluster of white near the eastward horizon, glistening amid the yellowish-brown of the flats. We looked at it for a few moments in silence, and then Colonel Mahon said, 'Well, let's be getting on'; and no one said anything more about Mafeking, but every one thought a great deal."

With the siege over there were still many things to do. One of the first things done was thus graphically and pathetically described by the special correspondent of the Press Association:—

"This morning the garrison was paraded around the cemetery, where a combined memorial and thanksgiving service was held, and we said our last good-bye to those of our comrades who lie in the little graveyard, and who were killed in defending Mafeking. When the service was over, we tried to sing 'God save the Queen,' but the hymn sounded feeble and quavering, for most of us had lumps in our throats.

"Then Colonel Baden-Powell addressed the garrison. It was one of his characteristic addresses—short, soldierly, and to the

point. 'We have been a happy family during the siege. The time has now come for breaking up. When we were first invested I said to you, "Sit tight and shoot straight." The garrison has sat tight and shot straight, with the present glorious result. Many nice things have been said about me at home, but it is an easy thing to be the figure-head of a ship. The garrison has been the rigging and the sails of the good ship *Mafeking*, and has brought her safely through her stormy cruise.' The Colonel then addressed each unit separately, commencing with the nurses, whom he complimented upon their pluck and devotion, shaking hands with Miss Hill, the matron of the Hospital. Coming to the Protectorate Regiment, he said: 'To you I need say nothing. Your roll of dead and wounded tells its own tale.' Then, shaking hands with Colonel Hore, he thanked him for the work he had done.

"To the artillery, under Major Panzera and Lieutenant Daniel, Colonel Baden-Powell said: 'You were armed with obsolete weapons, but you made up for these by your cool shooting and the way you stuck to your guns.'

"It was the turn of the British South African Police next. To them the Colonel said: 'I need not repeat to you men the story of the little red fort on the hill which Cronje could not take.'

"The Cape Police, under Captain Marsh, were addressed as follows: 'You have not been given an opportunity of doing anything dramatic, but throughout the siege you have held one of the nastiest places in the town, where the enemy were expected at any moment, and where you were always under fire.'

"Speaking to the town guard, the Colonel remarked that he ought to say a lot to them. They had turned out in such large numbers and in such good spirits, submitting to all the restrictions and routine of military law. They were, he added, like a walnut in a shell. People thought that once they got through the shell there would be no difficulty about the kernel. On Saturday last the enemy had got through the outer husk, but found they could make nothing of the kernel. The moment communication was

restored he would make it his business to represent to the High Commissioner the claims of the Town Guard for compensation, and he hoped he would succeed. In conclusion, the Colonel announced that any civilians who wished to return to their ordinary occupations immediately, might do so. Those who had none to return to, whose billets had been lost or business ruined, would be permitted in the meantime to draw trench allowances and to remain on duty in the inner defences. Colonel Baden-Powell shook hands with Major Goold Adams, the town commandant, who has done such excellent work, and thanked him for the help he had received from him.

"To the Railway Division, under Captain Moore, the Colonel said: 'I cannot thank you enough for what you have done. You have transformed yourselves from railwaymen into soldiers. Your work is not yet done, because it will be your business to reopen communication and get in supplies.' He then shook hands with Captain Moore and Lieutenant Layton, who has been raised to a commission from the ranks owing to his gallant work on Saturday.

"Turning next to the Bechuanaland Rifles, Colonel Baden-Powell said: 'Men, you have turned out trumps. With volunteers one knows that they have been ably drilled, but there is no telling how they will fight. I have been able to use you exactly as regular troops, and I have been specially pleased with your straight shooting. The other day, when the enemy occupied the Protectorate Fort, they admitted that they were forced to surrender by your straight shooting, under which they did not dare to show a hand above the parapet.'

"To the Cadet Corps the Colonel said: 'Boys, you have begun well as soldiers. I hope you will continue in the profession, and will do as well in after life.'

"Addressing the various units of Colonel Plumer's northern relief force, Colonel Baden-Powell pointed out how much they would all have liked to see the northern force relieve Mafeking off their own bat. They had not been strong enough to do that,

and there would not be much about them in the picture papers, but they had put in seven months of splendid work in a bad country and a bad climate. Now, they had their reward, for they not only had been able to assist in the relief of Mafeking, but the honour of bearing the brunt on the right flank of a well-fought fight, and had inflicted a severe blow upon the enemy, routing him, and kicking him out of Bechuanaland. He was proud to command them.

"Addressing the units of the southern relief force, the Colonel congratulated them upon a march which would live in history. He had heard of their coming from prisoners, and had been pleased by the news, but he had been better pleased to hear their guns and see the enemy fleeing. He complimented Colonel Mahon on commanding such a splendid body of men. On the subject of the Imperial Light Horse, the Colonel added that he was especially pleased to see them, for they had indeed travelled far for the relief of Mafeking, both corps having been present and themselves besieged in Ladysmith. They would, therefore, be able all the more to sympathize with the people in Mafeking.

"With these few simple, soldierly ceremonies, a stirring epoch in the history of the war was closed."

There was yet another ceremony, this time of an altogether jubilant nature, at Mafeking. On May 24th Baden-Powell (now Major-General) gave a dinner at Dixon's Hotel to the commanding officers of the relief columns and the garrison, and to officers who had distinguished themselves in the defence of the town. Here he made some more speeches. The first was in proposing the health of the Queen. He said:—

"Gentlemen,—It is customary on occasions like these for the president to rise at this juncture and to say, 'Gentlemen, the Queen.' In these three blunt words we Englishmen convey a very great depth of feeling. The other day, when the relieving column met the garrison, we merely shook hands with them and said, 'How do you do?' but I do not hesitate to say that there was more real feeling expressed in that hearty handshake than

in the weeping and embracing by which foreigners are accustomed to give expression to their relief. At a time like this I feel as if I could drink the health of Paul Kruger himself, coupled with that of Mr. Rhodes, because Paul Kruger has been the cause of this great outburst of Imperial feeling, and Mr. Rhodes was the red rag to the bull which drew him on. Well, we showed the rag, and the bull charged, but he did not expect to be surrounded by such a crowd of matadors and picadors as are harassing him now, and to-day the old bull is beaten down upon his knees. In the arena round us sit some of the men and all the women and children of England and her Colonies. At their head looking on is that great and gracious lady Her Majesty the Queen."

Then later on he spoke of the splendid march made by the relieving columns, comparing it with Lord Roberts's famous march to Kandahar, and pointing out that while Lord Roberts's troops made from 15 to 16 miles a day, Colonel Mahon had averaged nearly 20 miles. Finally, in replying to the toast of his own health, proposed by Mr. Whiteley, the Mayor of Mafeking, to whose great services and splendid loyalty he paid a well-deserved tribute, he once more thanked the Town Guard, the members of which, though nominally non-fighters, had done such valuable work during the siege.

When the news of the relief of Mafeking reached England the whole nation rejoiced with a fervour and abandon that was surprising even to those who rejoiced. There had been jubilation at the succour of Kimberley and gladness at the raising of the siege of Ladysmith, but the rejoicings on these occasions were as nothing to those which took place all over the country when it was known that Mahon and Plumer had at last shaken hands with Baden-Powell. The news of the fall of Pretoria, which arrived some weeks later, was received with gladness and satisfaction, but those who saw the London streets on Mafeking night and afterwards compared their appearance with that which

they presented when Pretoria fell will remember that the fall of the Transvaal capital did not occasion one-tenth of the mad delight which broke out all over London when it was known that Baden-Powell and his garrison had indeed "sat tight and shot straight" and won in the end. And it was not only in London and in England, but all over the British Empire that men rejoiced. Men, whatever may be their faults and failings, love courage, and endurance, and determination, and the siege of Mafeking had given the world such an exhibition of these qualities as it had rarely seen before. And Englishmen in particular felt that this exhibition had come at the right time. We began the war none too well; some of us began to whine and whimper, and some to scold and threaten, because things were going wrong with us, and here came the Man for the Moment, who feared nothing, fought against fearful odds, helped and encouraged those who fought under him, and made himself a very rock and tower of strength in the hour of need.

"These chaps have got an exaggerated idea of the importance of my personality," remarked Baden-Powell to an interviewer when the siege of Mafeking was over. Well! that's as may be, and it is good that a great man should be backward in estimating his own greatness. But we English are what we are because we love, admire, and in our own small way strive to emulate the example of our heroes, and in the man who held Mafeking for seven weary months, who heard thirty thousand shells crash into the little town, and who came out of the struggle as cheery and good-humoured as ever, we see a hero the importance of whose personality we do not think it possible to exaggerate. It will be a bad day for us when we give up putting our great men on pedestals. A great man set up upon a pedestal is a light and an incentive to thousands who, but for knowing of him, would be more than inclined to believe life a ghastly failure and to go down in its struggle without a single effort. It seems to me that in Baden-Powell's career as we have seen it so far—and

may God make it go much further and to still greater things, for England's sake!—there is realized the grand central idea which runs through Browning's *Epilogue to Asolando*:—

> "One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.
>
> "No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
> Greet the unseen with a cheer!
> Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
> 'Strive and thrive!' cry 'Speed—fight on, fare ever
> There as here!'"

**THE END**

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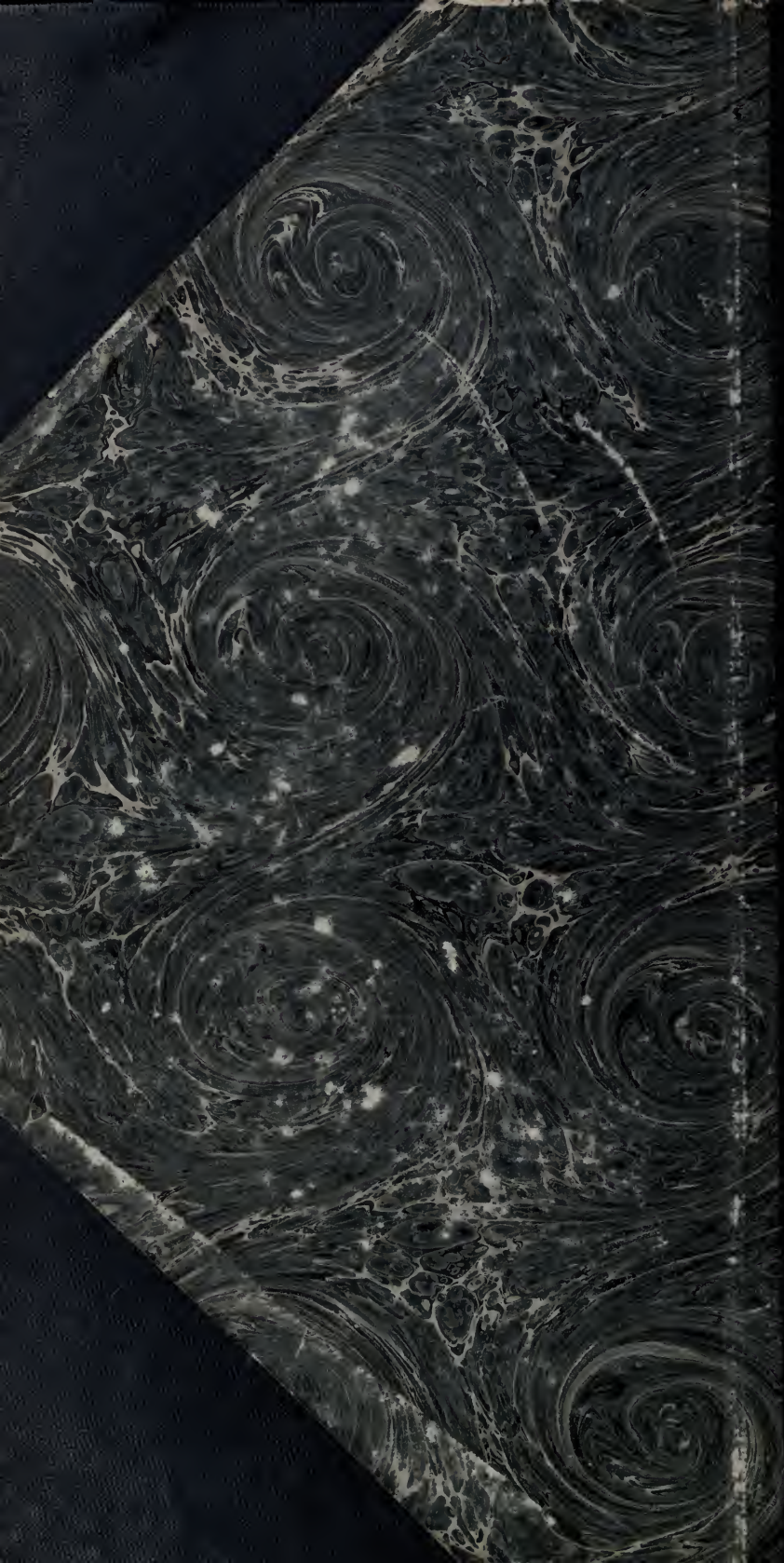
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